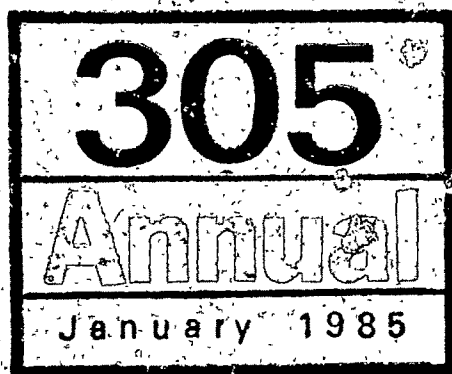


seminar



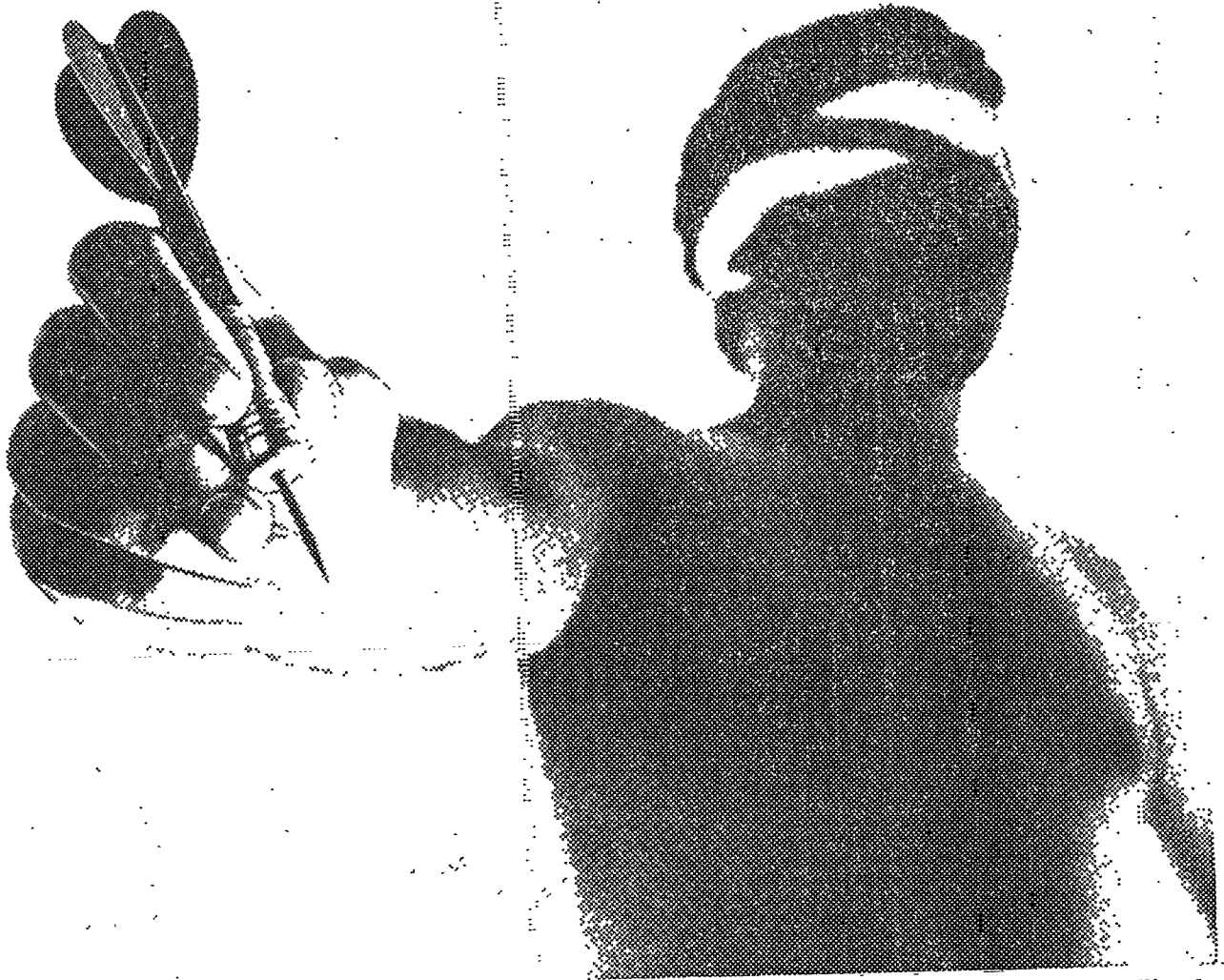
17

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That's nothing compared to boring the 4 blind holes in the Dump Tank of a nuclear reactor. A job only Walchandnagar can do.

The Dump Tank is a 5000 mm x 3200 mm x 8000 mm pressure vessel made from stainless steel. It weighs 70 tonnes! Because it is a crucial component of a nuclear power plant it has got to be manufactured to extremely rigid specifications. And we're the only people in the country who can tackle this job. It takes an exceptional kind of capability. Consider the boring operation of the 4 blind holes in the tubes located at the extreme corners of the tank.

The bores are 127 mm in diameter and 1500 mm in depth. Precisely. The bore size is controlled within 0.04 mm. The bore to bore centre distance, which is 5410 mm, has to be accurate within 0.8 mm. And the innermost faces of these bores have got to be co-planar to not more than 0.13 mm. And that's not all, the boring operation has to be carried out completely blind. You can't see it. And you can't reach it by hand! How could we manage to tackle this job?

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where there is WIL.**

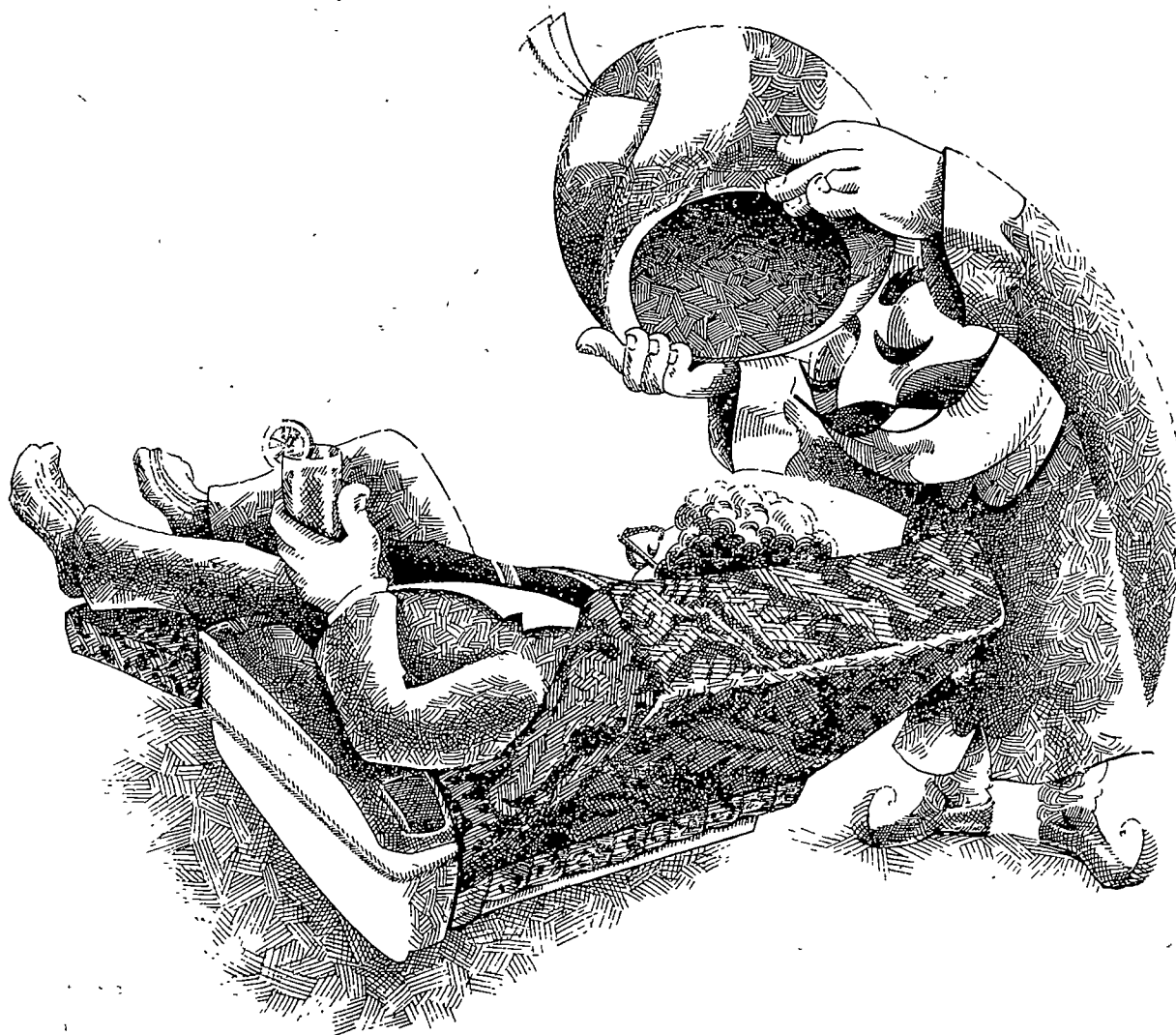


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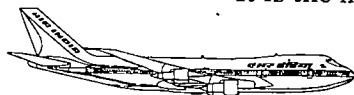
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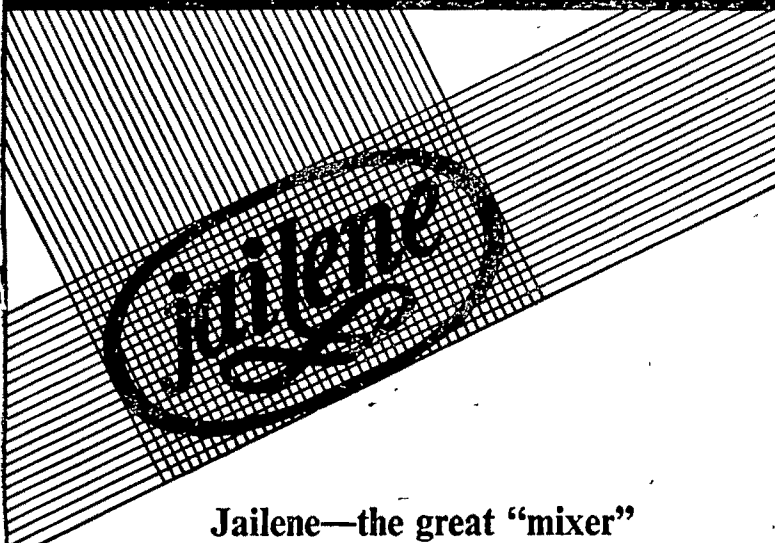
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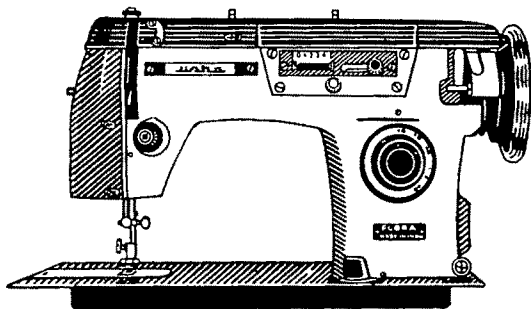
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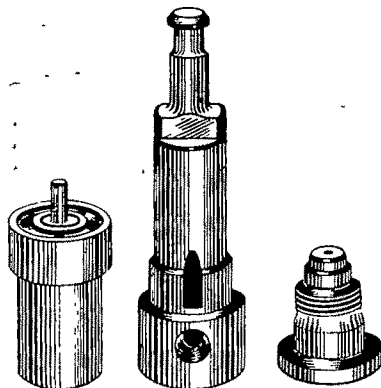


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GHAZIABAD U.P.

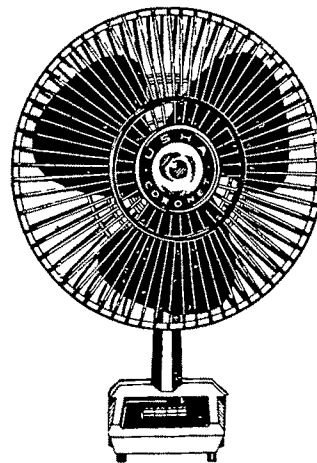
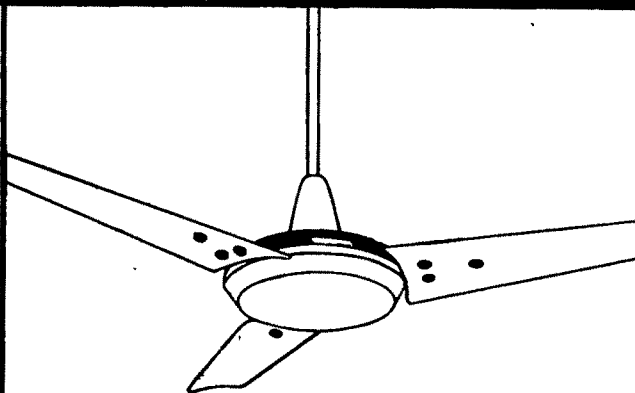
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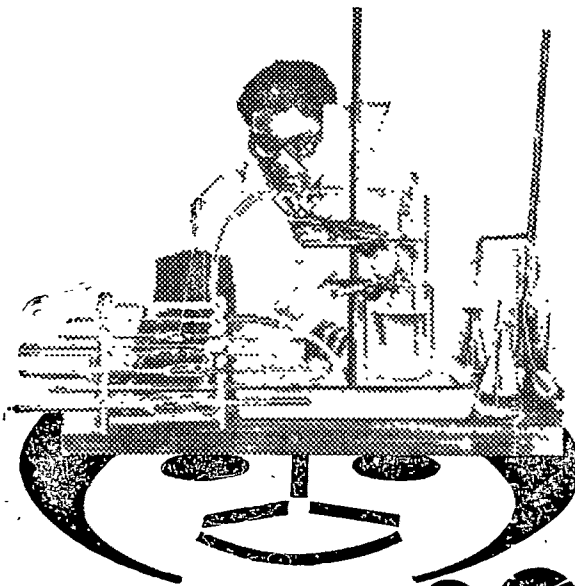
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IEL : at the roots of growth

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Fertilizer Division

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(SAA/IEL/1446



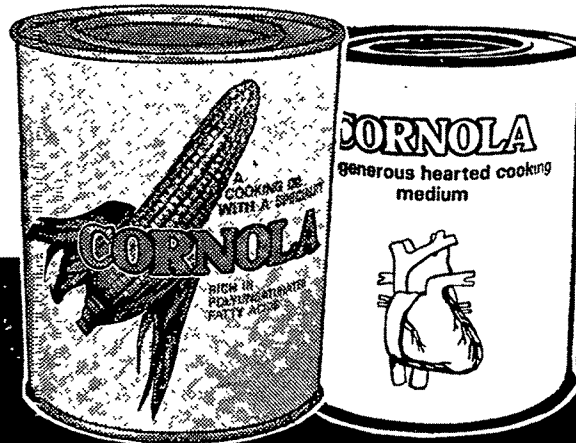
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शतप्रतिशत शुद्ध
उच्च स्तरीय मक्का तेल

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- पीली अनसैचुरेटेड फैटी एसिड्स प्रचुर मात्रा में - हृदय के लिए लाभदायक।
- यौवन और स्फूर्ति दायक-विटामिन "ई" से भरपूर।
- कम खर्च

कारनोला हरियाणा और दिल्ली शहर में 2 किलो के टिन पैकिंग में उपलब्ध है। जिसके एक तरफ मकई का चित्र तथा दूसरी तरफ हृदय का चित्र है।



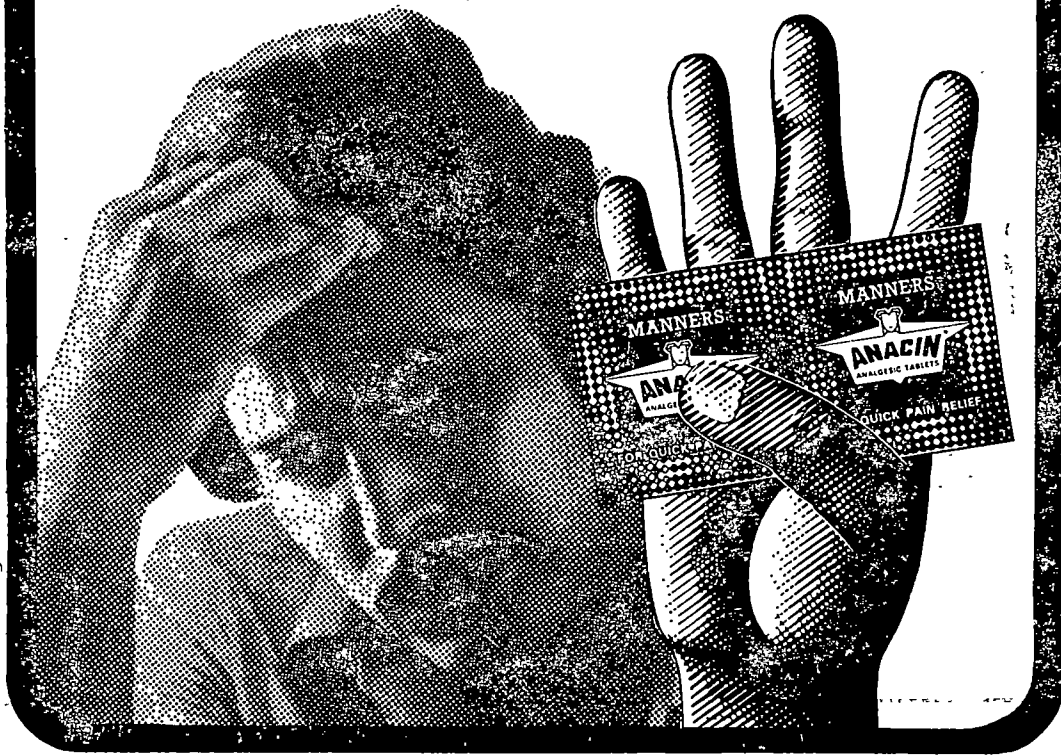
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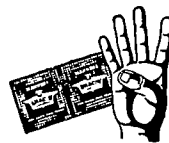
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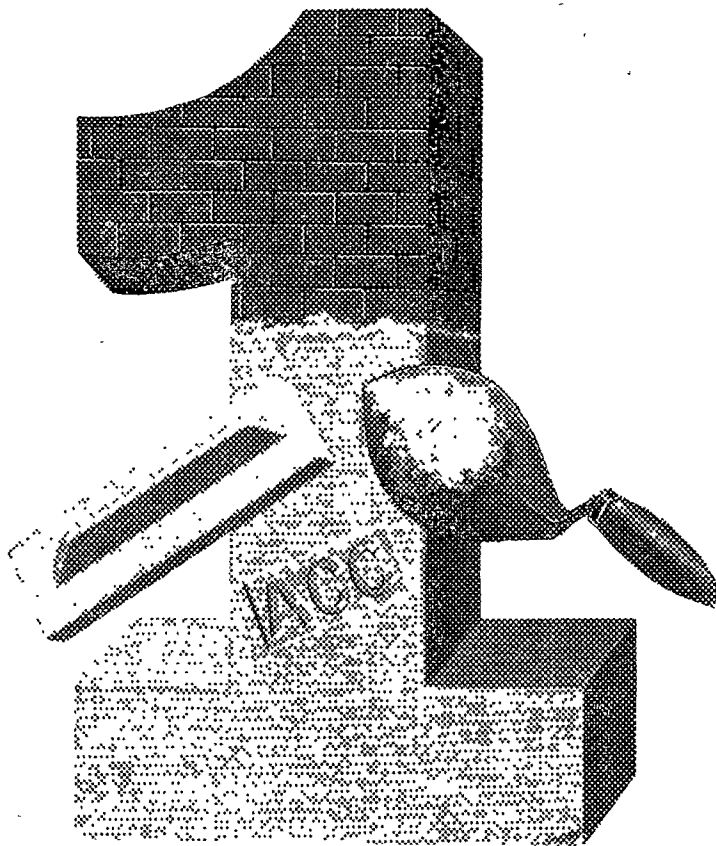
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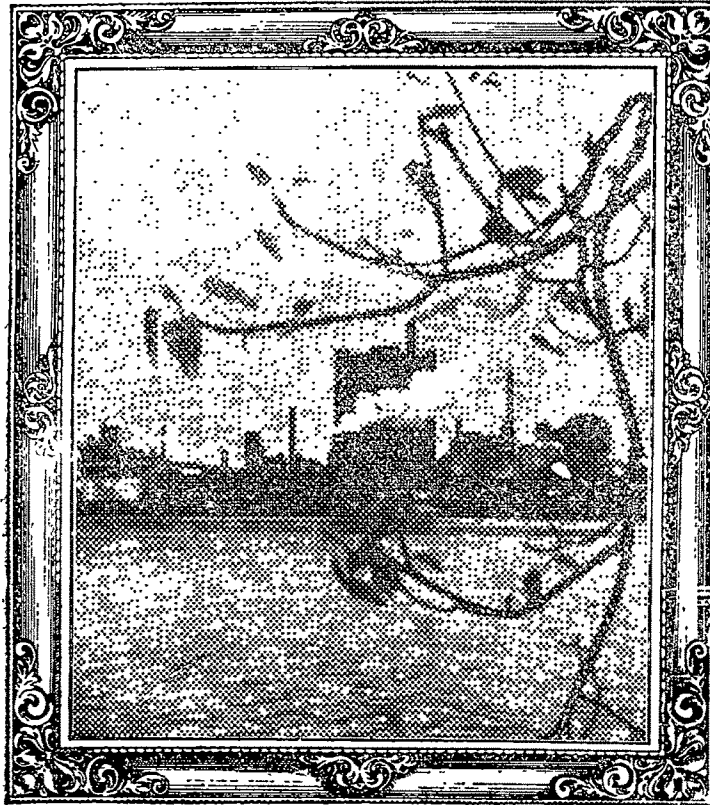
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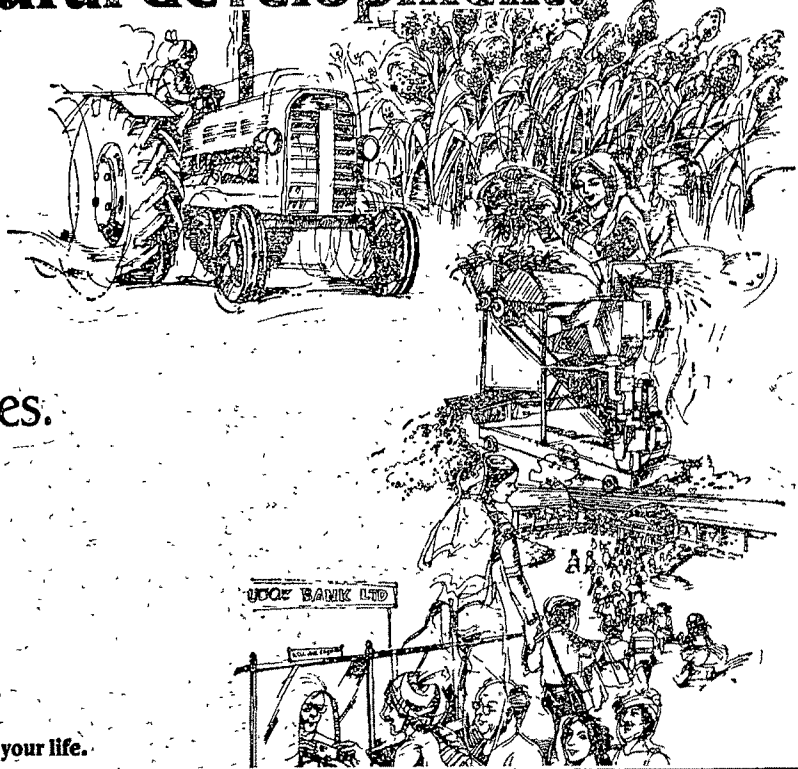
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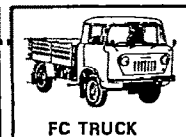
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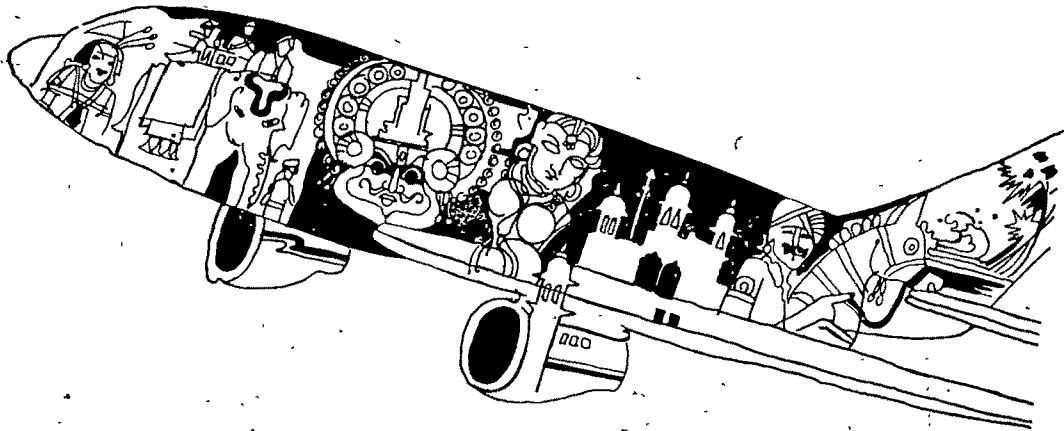
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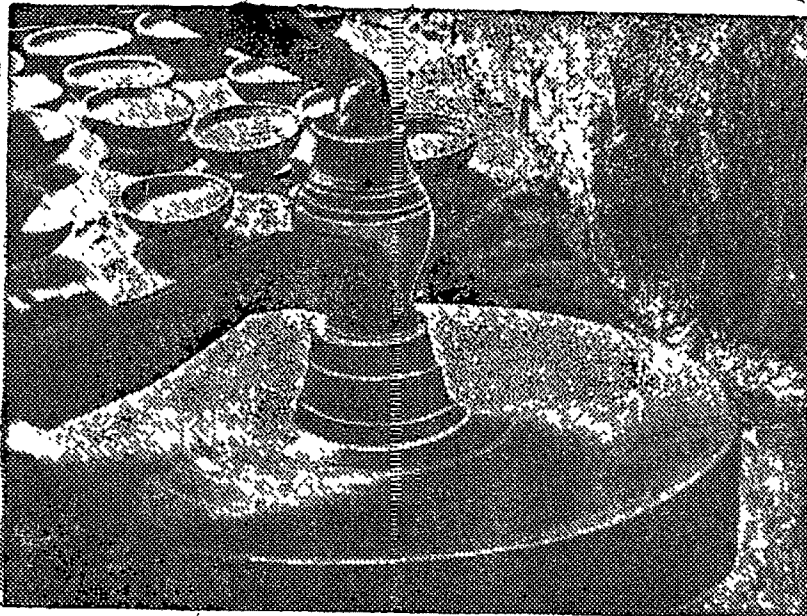
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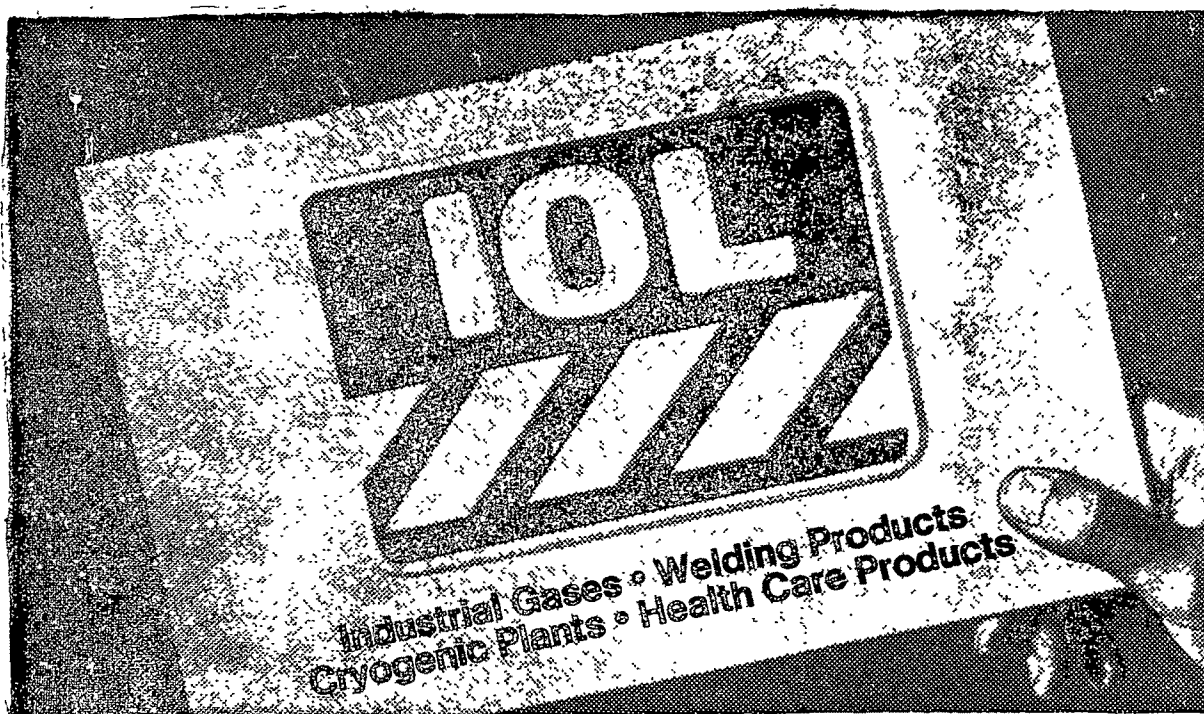


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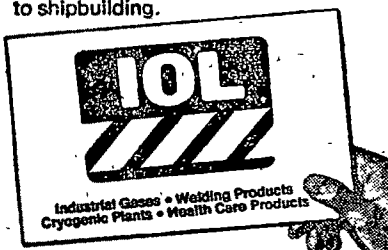
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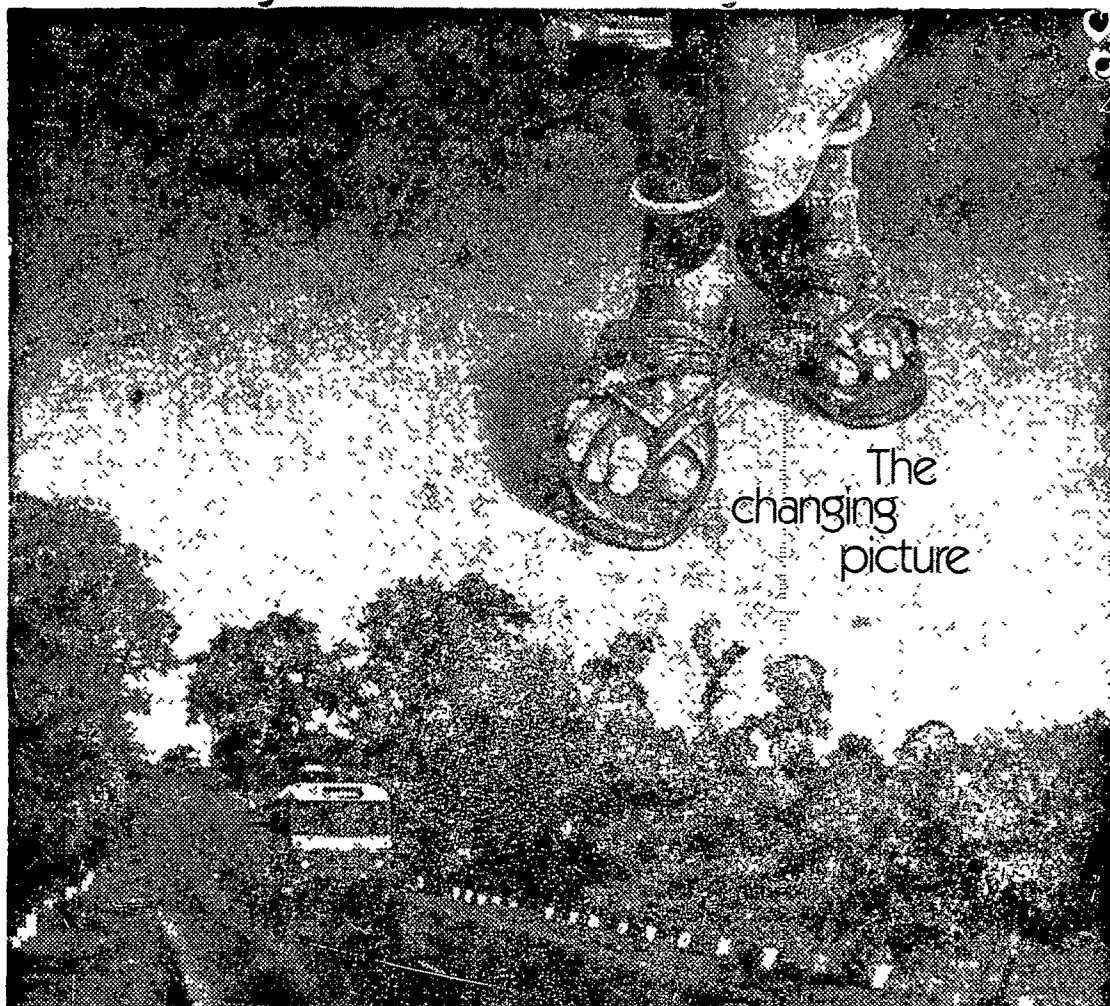
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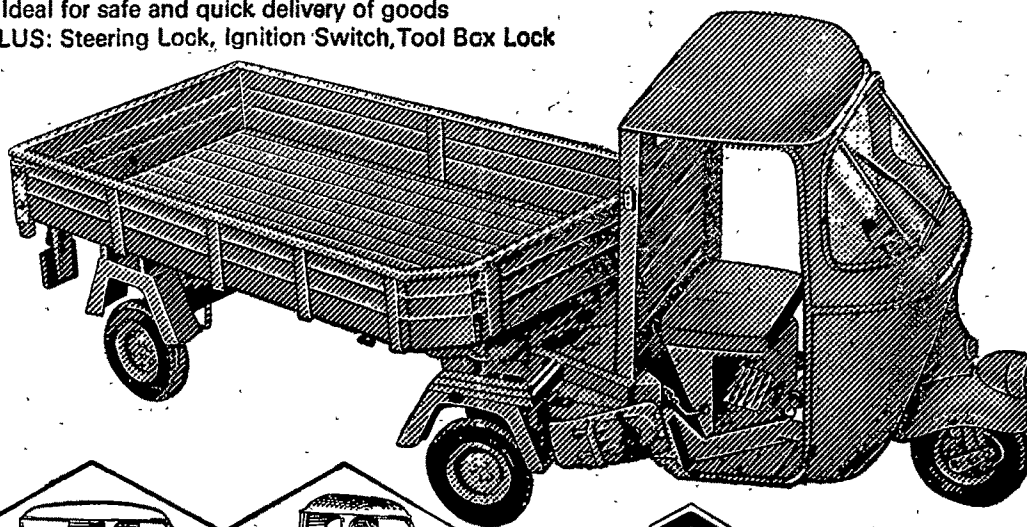
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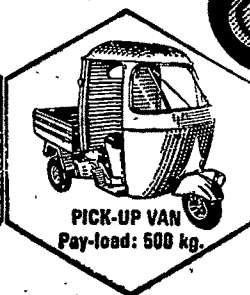
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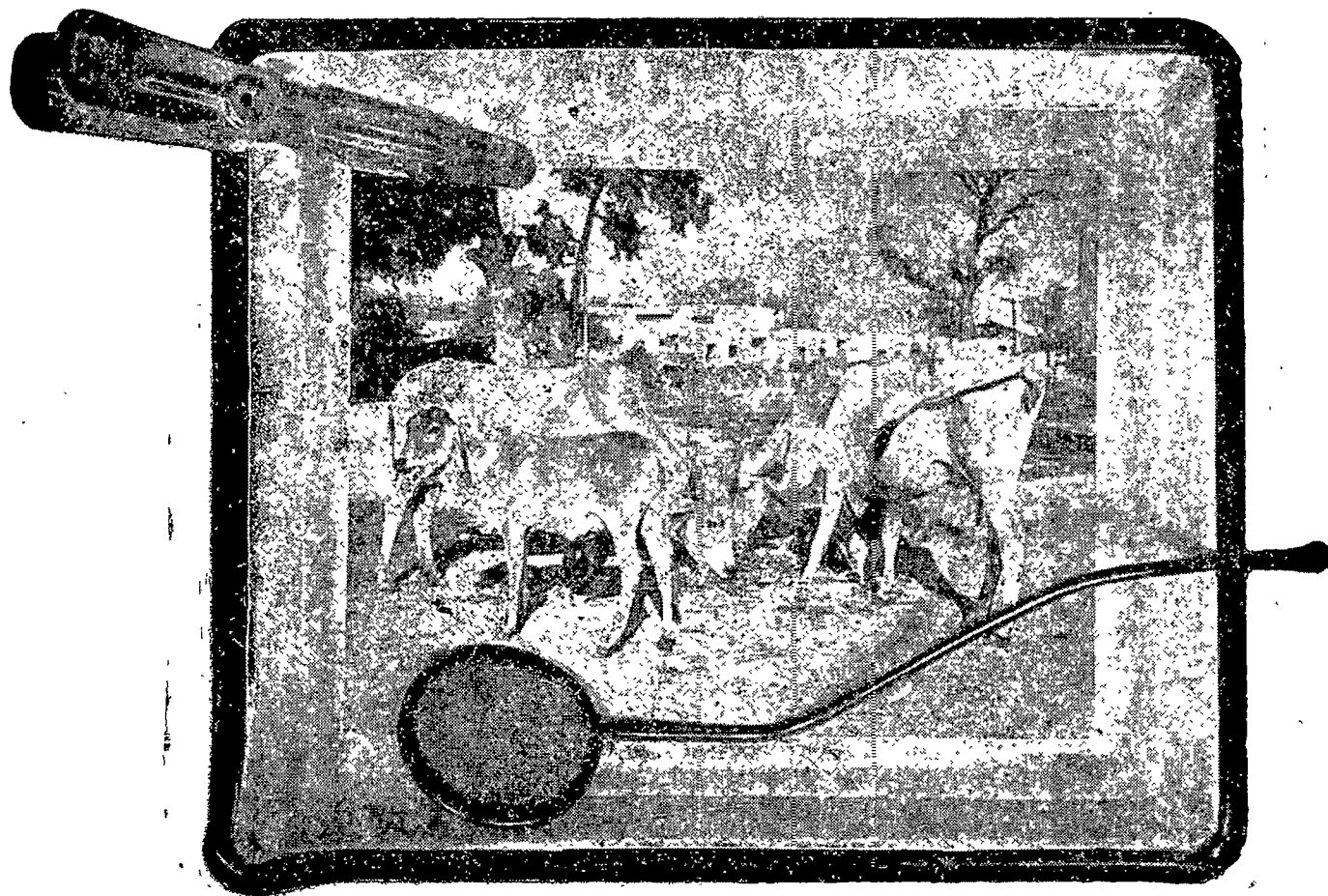


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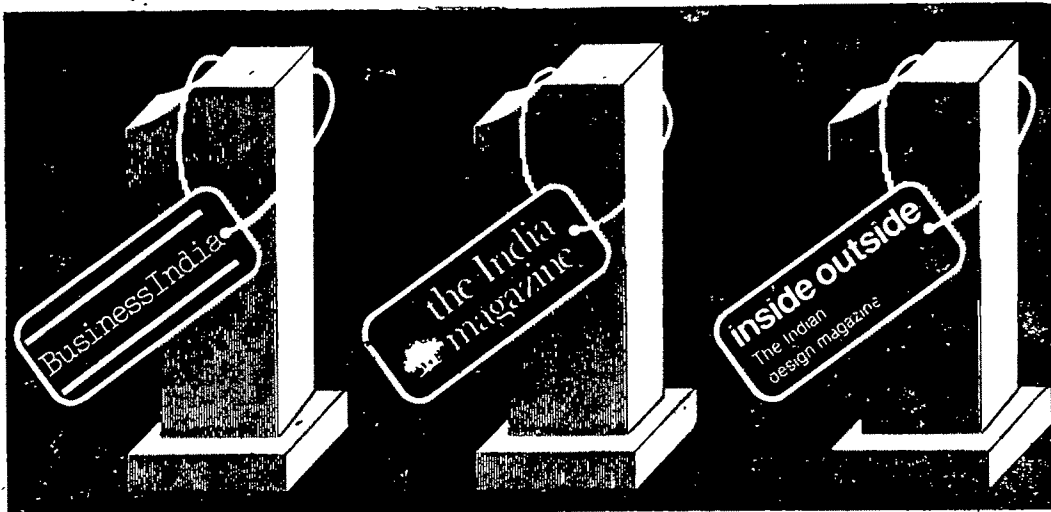
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305

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on the

year that was

symposium participants

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THE LIMITS OF CONSENSUS

Madhu Limaye, libertarian socialist, now not associated with any political party

GROWING INSURGENCY

Giri Deshingkar, Senior Fellow, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi

FUNDAMENTALISM

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A DIALOGUE FOR TODAY

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SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF VIOLENCE

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RECOGNISING THE CHANGE

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NON-GOVERNANCE

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THE POVERTY PROBLEM

K. Sundaram, and Suresh D. Tendulkar, Delhi School of Economics

IS NON-ALIGNMENT A POLICY?

C.B. Muthamma, former Ambassador and member of the Foreign Service, now retired

THE MORAL STREAM

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INDEX

A complete index of the twelve issues of 1984 and Seminar's titles from one to three hundred and five

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury of Dilip Chowdhury Associates

Moving out of '1984'

RAJNI KOTHARI and
SHIV VISVANATHAN

WHEN John Ruskin, the British author, was told in 1865 of the laying of the first telegraph line between India and Britain, he expressed his happiness, but asked: 'I wonder what the message will be.' Recalling this, Georges Fischer, the noted French scholar, asked me the other day: what is your message to the West today? Forced to come up with an instant answer, my response was somewhat capsuled: We have been all these years anxious to catch up with the West; the result is we are fast catching up with the rest of the third world! National power, a homogeneous culture, industrial affluence and military strength is what we went for. We are ending up being a society impervious to its people, socially pulverised, increasingly violent and, unable to cope, seeking a technocratic path out of political mismanagement.

How are we to arrest this 'progress' towards disaster? With what conceptual instruments, which political insights? As we move out of 1984 — a macabre year by any account, surpassing the Orwellian nightmare — we must come to terms with a simple truth: our future as a civilization hangs crucially on our political capacity to live up to its basic premises, in short, on our capacity to attenuate expansionist drives, personal ambitions and group vendetta. The 'unity' we seek will need to be based not on confrontation but on consensus, by returning to the values of moderation, mutuality and moral restraint. (Moral expansionism is more lethal than a political or military one.) Failing this, we face not just a bleak future but a future that will be convulsive, volatile and suicidal. Failing to build an 'order' that is based on civilizational values and craving instead to build a civilization based on order, we will end up having neither civilization nor order.

The point is simple: a polity based on centralized power, imposed unity,

aggressive postures towards neighbours and intolerance towards opposition and dissent must of necessity destroy institutions, provoke confrontation and extremism, make recourse to direct violence inevitable and substitute politics by technological fixes — not just of computers and management but also of terror, repression, murders and assassination. Not just the technology represented by safari suits but also that represented by men in uniform and with stenguns.

Today, as we brace ourselves out of 1984, India's power centre has collapsed, the spectre of disunity haunts us, the authorities in power are unable to administer without increasing resort to para-military and military forces, our large and creative minorities are fast losing faith in the system while the people at large feel rudderless and driven by forces beyond their control.

The politics of the party system and elections seems to have acquired a logic of its own without any real sense of responsibility to this larger reality, while those in charge of the government and administration seem to have grown immune to the very paralysis that engulfs them. There are of course deep stirrings of the people, an enormous surge of the democratic ethos from the grass-roots and, more than all this, a still unshaken faith in the democratic way among all strata of the people. Deeply concerned as everyone is, the democratic impulse is still alive. We are witness to this curious paradox of hope based on great failures and 'crises'.

In what follows we provide an overview of the state of the Indian polity and the contrary drives that inform it, followed by empirically illustrating the themes that emerge from such an overview by reference to the traumatic aftermath of Indira

Gandhi's assassination, mainly with reference to Delhi.

I. Overview: The history of politics in India is a story of a tragedy that began in hope. The modern secularist welfare State was an act of trust. Implanted into an old culture, it reflected the dynamic interaction of the western world and a re-awakened India. Politics was to be the binding mechanism, the ethical space for the resolution of conflicts in a society full of diversity of identities. The genius of the first two decades lay in the ability to create a new model of nation building based on a spectrum of institutions which could channelize individual drives and ambitions at various levels.

This included a unique party system, a rule bound administrative and judicial structure, a planning machinery, an impressive range of voluntary institutions from the village up to the regional and national levels. Without ever being formalized, they were based upon an ethic of service and cooperation, of adjustment and compromise. They reflected both an authenticity of individuals and institutions. Binding it all was the legacy of Gandhi, Nehru and the Indian National Congress.

As a result of these deeper bases — a fact that we seem to have sadly forgotten since — the Indian State which began as a hypothesis became a fact. It was fluid, it was plural, it realized the uses of disorder. It saw differences—ethnic, linguistic, ideological — not as a pathology to be suppressed but as a possibility to be domesticated. The Centre was vital because the margins retained a sense of autonomy.

The first two decades gave rise to a veritable order — not the order of homogeneity and standardization imposed on a diversity of different cultures and situations but one that drew its strength and its depth from diversities and a continuous dialogue among them. It was a raucous celebration of politics as difference. The story of the third decade is an obituary of the earlier era. What we confront today is not the crisis of politics but its virtual elimination. The last decade has marked the beginning of the Indian State that

has not only deprived society of a basic consensus but which has eschewed any scope of dialogue from it. The violence, the fear, the repression, the rhetoric of deceit and doublespeak, are symptoms not of crises but of the end of politics.

Yet, every cry of grief inaugurates a moment of analysis that must lead to action. In confronting the last decade we witness the consolidation of three separate grids of tyranny. It reflects the equation of electoral politics with democratic politics. It marks the decline of the State from an adjudicator of interests to a criminal *persona*. And it seeks to perceive development as an essentially techno-bureaucratic enterprise. The crystal seed of all three evils is the marked decline in the importance and authenticity of institutions. It reflects the loss of politics as an ethical space, its inability to function as an idiom for translating the diversity of interests so crucial to the unity of India. The failure of politics was a failure of pluralism. We must now examine the logic of each trend in turn.

At the very beginning we confront an essential paradox. The Indian State which grew out of the violence of communalist partition was conceived in a secular manner. The politician and the party were assigned a significant role in controlling communal forces, in modifying and localizing them. Communalism as a formal ideology was a marginal phenomenon restricted to marginal groups. Yet, today, communalism has paradoxically become the child of the secular politics.

The logic of this paradox can be understood by unravelling the nature of electoral politics, which has introduced into the social fabric a reign of quantity over quality. The logic of numbers became the logic of survival, a numbers game, where an electoral majority constituted the sole basis of power. Such a formal calculus emptied politics of its ideological content. Yet, despite large majorities there was a desperate insecurity, a sense of continuous anxiety. It was to the credit of Indira Gandhi that she introduced the problem of poverty into the public concern. Unfortunately, instead of

becoming an ideological issue, it became a rhetorical one.

The Congress(I) inaugurated the destruction of the old institutions but failed to replace them with new institutions which could inaugurate the process of transformation. It was this erosion of institutions that accelerated pathologies of the electoral process. We were left with no institutional buffers between the leadership and the masses, no real hierarchy of party organisation to encourage debates and negotiation. Politics became a direct electoral appeal to the masses. Elections became an end in themselves, a desperate struggle for survival of the ruling coterie.

The erosion of secular dialogue was evident in the following steps. Firstly, in the use of communal organisation at the local level, of which the Shiv Sena in Bombay is an outstanding example. Secondly, in the displacement of political organizations by cultural associations like the RSS and the Jamaat-e-Islami. The third step in the abolition of politics began with the lumpenization process inaugurated by Sanjay Gandhi.

Accompanying the lumpenization of politics was the psychological intimidation of the middle class by playing upon their real fear of disorder. The perpetual focus was on instability, rather than order, rhetoric rather than ideological debate. The middle class now felt that reasons of State could legitimize repression and violation of norms. The recent incidents in Punjab, Kashmir, Sikkim, all attest to this fact. Regional forces like the Telugu Desam or the Assam movement were seen as divisive of national unity embodied in the person of the Prime Minister.

The retreat from poverty as a political issue had produced an erosion in the traditional support base of the party among minorities, tribals, and the poor. The new social base for the party in power became the Hindu majority and the Congress played on the fears of this new 'hurt' majority. The base of the Congress had retreated to the communal heartland of Hindu India. The logic of electoral

politics had transformed a secular party into a communally based one.

The transformation of an organic polity into a mechanical electoral system has been accompanied by an even more frightening trend — the criminalization of the modern State. If the first grid reflects a narrowing of politics, the second reflects an even greater loss of autonomy — the hijacking of the State by criminal elements. This is rooted in the desperate need to stay in office. It is a combination of two processes — the use of gangsterism as a substitute for party organisation and the complete permeation of the State by money power. The new infrastructure of politics consists not of grass-root individuals sensitive to local context, but of musclemen and local mafias. These are either directly paid for, or are maintained by and thrive on the new, high-growth sector of the Indian economy — the combination of liquor kings, smugglers and fast-buck politicians.

To begin with, the gangsters were needed to capture booths and smugglers to provide election finances. But, today, the bullies are not restricted to the task of extracting funds, but increasingly mediate the play of power itself. It is a well-known fact that scores of MLAs have had (and will continue to have) criminal records. The marriage of gangsterism and criminality in turn has rendered the Indian State into an instrument of internal repression. Symptomatic of this is the brutalization of the police and paramilitary forces.

The last few years have seen an unprecedented increase in repression in the countryside. The horrendous waves of criminal assault on the rural poor and the landless at the hands of the landowning castes are increasingly backed by the law-and-order machinery — the ordinary police where it is available, paramilitary forces where it is not. The investigations by civil liberty organizations record the growing incidence of police terror against grass-roots movements. Murders in police custody have become common. The modern Indian State has become anti-people. Legislations like the NSA have been used against trade unions and political opponents.

Accompanying the lumpenization and criminalization of politics is a new trend towards technicization evident in the introduction of management experts into the system. The recent demands for a Presidential system has to be seen in this context; it heralds not a demand for genuine system change but a preference for managerial and technological manipulation as a substitute for politics. The recent demands for military intervention in civil conflicts is a harbinger of the introduction of management models in our society.

Lumpenization and managerialization have become sibling processes, where one facilitates the manipulation of the other. In the rituals of the new laboratory State, sports, religion, media all become spectacular acts of benumbing the population, preventing an awareness of political consciousness and dialogue. The purposive State committed to transformation has given way to a techno-bureaucratic order wedded to status quoism and repression.

Add to all this the staggering cost of an anti-people State. Once the activity of cutting forests was the task of the contractor with marginal cuts to the forest official. Today the minister or MP has obtained control of this process. The result of this is the denudation of forest lands and the deprivation of the poor and landless through denial of access to community resources. The criminalization of politics combined with its technicization have paved the way for the State becoming an enemy of the poor. From the first decades of the Bengal famine to the great Bihar one, famine and poverty were always concerns of an enlightened State. Yet today one hardly hears mention of natural disasters.

There is an uneasy feeling that the criminal-technocratic State has decided that the poor are dispensable. What it does not realize is that such a model of development makes the State itself a captive of the world capitalist order and the global corporate structure, the prime logic of which is to undermine the autonomy of all States except in the imperial core. At the same time, the search for hegemony beyond our borders has made us part of the global

military structure. It is dominated by a Research and Development (R & D) structure on which we have no control.

Yet, strangely, the possibilities of recovery are encoded in the very paradox of this non-dialogic State. This is rooted in the fundamental belief among the masses in the possibilities of politics. The return of politics and the roots of an alternative polity lie in these marginalized groups.

The recovery of politics demands a recapture of space corrupted or perverted by the lumpen-technocratic State, demands a return to institution-building and a belief that personalities cannot usurp the place of institutions. It holds that violence and brutality are a negation of politics. The roots of such a recovery of dialogue are anchored in the normative plurality of these grass-roots movements. It follows that even a minimal programme of political recovery and institution-building must be sensitive to the following requirements.

It must be sensitive to the new form of political thought and organization reflected in the grass-roots movements. These movements reflect not only a faith in politics, but a rugged confidence in its variety. They have added to the availability of political ideas and styles beyond the original vision of the Indian polity. They represent a new form of voluntarism, political but different from mere party politics. They aim at ends that go beyond the mere seizure of political power. While economic in content, they go beyond the usual parochiality of economists and cover a larger terrain. They encompass the political movement for equity and social justice, the environmental movement, the women's movement, the civil liberties movement, the new regional movements, the peasant movement and even the small and feeble anti-war movement.

They have widened the arena of politics beyond its original legislative-electoral frame, both by including issues not generally considered politics (e.g., women's rights, health and nutrition, education, science policy) and redefining the

very nature of the political process (e.g., by bringing to the centre of the polity the problems of the most marginalized strata of the population). It is by reciprocity between these movements and the party process that political activity can be revitalized.

Essential to the recognition of such a grass-roots style is in the necessity of decentralization both in the governance of the country and in decision-making. This is the only way to ensure the integrity of the country and the well-being of the people, as well as the full participation of diverse communities and regions in the national endeavour. It will require major and drastic electoral reforms at every level, and viable and strict separation of money from political campaigning.

Let it be clearly understood that such refashioning of both the structure and the process of development will not be achieved by some mechanical formula for the devolution of formal authority from the Centre downward. Such devolution will indeed be necessary but it will not by any means be sufficient. We will need more autonomous States. We will need panchayati raj, autonomous corporations, a 'three-tier' federal structure. But these by themselves will prove inadequate.

What is really needed is a process of channelising the great spurt of awakening and consciousness among our people, enabling grass-roots organisations and non-governmental bodies to take charge of community affairs, unburdening the bureaucracy from unnecessary accretions to its duties and responsibilities, and enabling the poor and the disabled to mend matters for themselves.

The crux of a decentralised, democratic society is a high degree of self-governance at various levels and in diverse sectors and segments of social reality. The Indian people have, in their soundings to the 'system', expressed a yearning for this. All that is needed to galvanise this creative urge of the people is to restructure the relationship between the State and the social order — and to remember that the Indian social order cannot stand the strain of centralised politics. For India to

come into its own, we need a decentralised polity.

The recovery of the margin through the grass-roots and the reconstruction of the Centre through decentralization must be seen culturally. This is crucial. The problem of politics in India is a problem of cultural diversity. The usual dichotomy between centralization and decentralization, between secular and parochial identities, are uncalled for in this situation. These polar oppositions need to be organically interrelated and ordered through a plural system. A strong Centre cannot be built except by drawing upon the vast resources and diverse skills of the people through multi-tier and multi-sectoral corpus of institutions. A Centre that stands aloof and unincorporated becomes alien, loses touch and increasingly fails to command allegiance and loyalty. In the end it loses its authority and degenerates into a rumpus.

On the other hand a decentralized institutional model cannot even function effectively or prevent itself from being captured by narrow vested interests except by being organically tied to a functioning national framework. In the absence of a stable Centre, decentralization could well lead to fragmentation, to violent social collusions that might discredit the whole social process.

Similarly, for the State to acquire secular authority over a large and diverse terrain of caste and communal orientations, it is necessary for it not to suppress their interplay but to order them systematically. Any attempt at forced modernization of an apolitical variety by the Centre only leads to more rigid parochial reactions. On the other hand, a sustained process of politicization only serves to undermine exclusivist caste identities and fundamentalist urges by generating pressures for social and economic change.

There is some evidence to suggest that such a political process forging a common front by transcending immediate interests is under way in some regions, both in the south and in the north. It is too early to say

how effectively the conflicts will be resolved, especially in the face of the highly oppressive behaviour of the State apparatus. The challenge before us is to join these various movements along all these dimensions—the grass-root struggles against oppression and a fascist State order, the movements for local autonomy and decentralization, the anti-imperial movement within India based on the new rural awakening, the movement against war and militarism and forces of ecological concern. Woven together, they will provide the basis for a comprehensive intervention in India's historical process, lay the foundations of an alternative polity and provide a framework for a truly democratic Indian State.

II. Delhi, November 1984: The irony of social science lies in the horrifying urgency of a scenario becoming true almost at the very moment of writing. What happened in Delhi in the recent weeks offers an almost paradigmatic fit to the analysis we have sketched so far. In what follows we shall describe how the carnage in Delhi became a microcosm of the general scenario of politics we presented above.

The facts of the violence immediately following the assassination of Indira Gandhi have been catalogued. The reports in *The Indian Express*, the joint PUDDR, PUCL report, the report on Sultanpuri by a team of Delhi academics, the report from Nanaksar Ashram and such others have all chronicled these events with boldness and lucidity. What we shall focus on is the pattern of violence underlying these events. As typologists of violence, we realized that we were confronting not an act of a small group of terrorists as in Punjab or a communal riot as in Hyderabad or Jamshedpur. What we witnessed was the calculated organized terror by the State against the members of a community.

The evidence available is awesome. Consider, first, the sheer scale of logistics that the recent genocide involved as an information system. It demanded the prompt identification of all Sikh households in each locality. Such immediate spotting could not have been done without the concurrence of ration shop and

kerosene depot owners and occasionally by headmasters who used school registers for identification. Beyond the logistics of information lies the logistics of supply. In many areas, kerosene was distributed widely in handcarts. In South Delhi, Delhi Transport (DTC) buses were used by marauding gangs.

The involvement of the State machinery was not purely through negative acts of omission by being unavailable to the victim but through acts of participation. Witnesses have testified to the participation of police personnel not only in disarming Sikhs but in the actual acts of looting and rape. The newspaper report on the raid by a special squad on the Kingsway Camp police station only attests to this general suspicion. To this we must add the systematic movement of truckloads of rioters and kerosene from Haryana into Delhi. It is worth noting that such a movement went unnoticed given the automatic alert which sealed Delhi within hours of the assassination. All these activities, we realized, were the systematic rituals of a terrorist State.

For the guardians of memory this is important. The logic here is not the logic of communalist Partition. The mixing of these memories will not do. Earlier we had failed to confront the nature of the Partition as violence and today we are confounding the logic of one with the logic of the other, rewriting history in the oddest of fashions. During communalist violence, neighbour fought against neighbour. Here we cite as one of the few positive facts that in many areas Hindu neighbours repeatedly protected Sikh friends against the violence of the lumpen elements. The violence of communalist Partition was a frenzied spontaneity marked by ritualized styles of killing. The violence of the Delhi riots was all too often premeditated. In an area of Delhi University, pits were dug and labelled 'Sardar Ghat' in anticipation. Even as regards the style of violence, the systematic burning of human beings was something new. Doctors attest to the difficulty of burning a human body and the presence of phosphorus (*saphed cheez*) comes as a frightening act of premeditation.

All this leads us to conclude that what we are witnessing is not the spontaneous upsurge of communal violence but the development over time of a new technology of oppression under the aegis of the State. The history of this goes back to the Emergency. But memories are so short that many fail to see the connection between the Emergency and the recent terrorism. Together they announce the arrival of an anti-people State. It is in this specific context that the sociology of Delhi city provide a revealing microcosm of our analysis.

The geneology of the present violence goes back to the history of Jaggmohan's Delhi. One must understand the sociology of the city he and other bureaucrats created. To the old Delhi of the Mughal era, the imperialism of Britain had added the New Delhi of Edmund Lutyens. Lutyens, as technocrat-architect, inaugurated the Haussmannic trend of city planning in India, of linear grids that cut indifferently across human communities in order to conform to the logic of imperial power, the logic of the machine. With the institution of the Emergency came the third city of Delhi embodied in the activities of its Vice-Chairman and later Lt. Governor. Implicit in it is the technocratic bias of modern politics.

For Jaggmohan and for many other bureaucrats during the Emergency, the poor in the slums were brakes on progress. Legally they were viewed as squatters, 'hygienically' they became carriers of virus, of disease, requiring the strong hand of the State to purge, cleanse and renovate them. In a revealing poem that he wrote, Jaggmohan confessed:

'I know
I am no genius
no Haussman reborn
no Lutyens with a chance
or Corbusie with Nehru's arms...'

This dedicated bureaucrat saw in the Emergency (and Sanjay Gandhi) the moment of his technocratic dreams, his own self-admitted realization of Haussmannism. The demolition all over Delhi was an attempt to erase the slums and visually cleanse Delhi. The technocratic impetus is obvious in the writings of

the man. He stated that slum-clearance was a technological act transcending politics. He claimed that 'what has been bulldozed is not the slums but their politics, not the *jhuggi-jhompries* but the physical and mental diseases they reared. Bulldozers are instruments of development not of demolition.'

To the technocratic bias of the Emergency-State one has to add the logic of a 'triage' model. The rituals of the laboratory State view the poor, the marginal, the squatter, the migrant both as an object of development and as dispensable. He is paradoxically the unit of progress and the index of retardation. One sees the logic of this in the family planning programme. Family planning involved both technique and massification. It legitimized all sorts of measures against vagrants and slum dwellers in order to provide the statistical index of progress that the technocratic State requires. During the Emergency, the statistics of sterilization competed with records of industrial productivity for attention. It was the slums that were both the object of demolition and family planning; ironically those who wanted allotments in the outer rings of Delhi had often to produce sterilization certificates. The displacement of many of these people to the outer rings of Delhi city brings us to the third aspect of our analysis.

The Haussmannism of the Imperial Lutyens received a lumpenic twist in the hands of the Emergency bureaucrats. Old communities were disrupted and forced to the margins of the city. The process of rehabilitation was inevitably and understandably slow. What was far more important was that in these areas the old sense of community was destroyed. There was little or no interaction between various groups in the new context. It was from these margins of the city that the party recruited the crowds for its rallies. It was these very same lumpens who could be recruited to attack any community, indifferent as to the identity of the victim.

It is from this outer sector of Delhi — Sultanpuri, Trilokpuri, Shakarpur — that the worst acts of the recent violence came. If the

Emergency created the first loss of autonomy by emasculating all intermediary institutions between the leader and the masses (such as trade unions, the universities, the judiciary, the press) the recent violence indicates that the State has forged from these lumpens a new instrument of terror that can still any residual dissent.

But the logic of this terror goes even further. Its power lies in the fact that it need not discriminate between the innocent and the guilty. The logic of terror is not the logic of punishment. As a social scientist put it in a recent discussion in Delhi, 'In the terror process no one can be secure for the category of transgression is in fact demolished. Any one may be a victim no matter what action he chooses. Innocence is irrelevant.' The murder of the Mazhabi Sikhs or the Sindhi Sikhs who had little to do with Akali politics or terrorist demands illustrates this. One is also reminded of the earlier massacre of innocent pilgrims at the Golden Temple.

We are yet consciously to confront the paradox of a terrorist regime, the fact that it could destroy part of the community in order to control the rest. The notion of the State as protector of the community became increasingly ironic yet difficult to dislodge. The first reactions of many, even those who had been predicting such trends, was to appeal to the State. Genocide for reasons of State was something they had not come to terms with. Repeatedly one expected the State to move immediately to enforce control, to establish relief camps, to facilitate rehabilitation and to guarantee justice. One expected leaders to express some sense of horror and atonement for what had been done. The power of the Gandhian hunger fast has however been lost on his bastard epigoni. Even when relief measures were promised, they were role-playing moves, announcing compensation like a publicity oriented insurance company would.

This brings us to another pertinent point regarding the prevailing interpretation encouraged by the State and by many members of the

majority community. The riot was seen as retribution restoring order to the polity. The violence is first seen as an act of restoring a presumed imbalance. To it is added something more complex. This is the notion that as a catastrophe it was natural, not man-made. This was best reflected in the discussion on compensation. The compensation offered was nominal. Human beings and material objects were both treated as 'resources' lost. When appeals for increased compensation were made, the bureaucratic reply was 'if we do so, people affected by floods might ask for more'.

When genocide becomes 'natural', one confronts the real logic of a terrorist State. This violence, which was at the margin for years, had moved cognitively to the centre. Geographically, it had spread from repression of tribals in border States to the Capital. The Sikh, the Naga and the insulated academic-intellectual had become one as siblings in prospective terror. The terrorist State seems to have decided that they were all dispensable, either for being too weak or too different, reminding one again of the doctrine of 'triage'. Intellectual, religious or economic autonomy is today at a discount.

One also became aware that there was not only the violence of the macro-machines of State terror. One had also to confront the everyday violence where a neighbourhood, a school or even a bus encapsulated such coercion. It was also a violence that traversed almost all age sets; it was the involvement of children in the riots that many found most frightening. What one witnessed was not the criminal violence of adolescence but of children of ages 8 to 12. Off the area of Wazirpur, a driver of a soft drinks truck was attacked and kids gorged on his drinks, as if violence and such consumption were merely two variants of the gross appetite of this generation. This spectre of children as gene pools of such future violence is unnerving.

The Sikh had also become the surrogate *baniya* of this era. All the jealousies of the mob surfaced against a minority regarded as extremely

successful and cocky. The riot was regarded by many in Delhi as an act of pruning and also a judicious whittling down of the Sikh ego. The metaphor of a gleeful sport was all too obvious. The mobs as spectators invaded the field to help shape the directions of the tussle. The analogy goes proper. The notion of fascism as a spectacle, the sportiness of violence, the looted consumer goods as trophies of wild game, all add to the unease. The idea of the State as a plebiscitary spectacle was played out at two levels that week. The body of Mrs. Gandhi on display, and innumerable spectacles of shops, houses and bodies burning were felt to be related. Some felt that the cessation of the first act could have easily brought the other to a close.

There is one last point we wish to make in this context. This is the fact of order as tyranny and disorder as terror meeting undialectically in fascism. On the one hand we realize how the lumpen forces of the ruling party constitute an informal army of terror. To confront and control this, there was imposed on Delhi a real army. We have lost our faith in civilian solutions, believing it is only the military that can ensure stability. The danger lies in the army getting tainted by the incompetence of civilian politics. The army today represents one of the few untainted institutions in India and the danger that we visualize was stated by a Japanese analyst in a different context. Maryuama observed that in the process of fascist development, the party and the organisation constitute a kind of unofficial army. He added that, conversely, the army might become only a kind of unofficial fascist party.

If the logic of terrorism presents the frightening part of our analysis, the logic of the emerging voluntarism contains the heartening trends. The career of voluntarism articulated in the statements and stories of many individuals — bureaucrats, students, teachers, journalists, activists — followed an almost similar sequence. Initially, like many others, they crowded the terraces watching Delhi burn. They were impotent watchers of a spectacle and like all spectators they felt guilty. In witnessing such violence many realized

the tenuousness not only of their concepts but of their very lives. In that moment, they understood the importance of engaging in a dialogue with history. The spectator, they realized, must turn witness to record, analyse and explain the emerging patterns of violence in our society.

At the initial level of human encounter many of them began as mourners. The mourner, they realized, was both listener and friend. Mourning was a 'dialogic' act where the pain of the victim is articulated in speech. As a ritual it is the first step in the return to a sense of community. It allows for both memory and return. It facilitates the articulation of grief, the relieving of the moments of terror and provides a graduated movement toward normalcy. As an old Sikh put it to an I.I.T. professor, *Tumhari duty sun-na hai, meri duty rona hai*. This human act of listening preceded in many cases all formal acts of social service. One realized that it was the right of the victim to be heard and recorded. Only then could the right tenor of rehabilitation and justice be achieved.

In the moment of recording and service, the spectator became a self-conscious witness. This movement of transition is repeatedly experienced by many of those who worked in the various refugee camps. It includes the diverse members of the Nagrik Ekta Manch, the Delhi University students and teachers and also the priests at the Vidya Jyoti seminary. What many witnessed was the sheer unspeakable horror of bodies burnt. Repeatedly the survivors told the same story: of how the victims, generally male, were dragged out, sometimes shorn, beaten and thrown into the gutter and when almost unconscious burnt with a mixture of phosphorus and kerosene. One realized that this was not an act of retribution. Its scale and quality transcended all acts of terrorism in Punjab. The quality of it permeated further as one wrote postcards enquiring about the missing, filled innumerable rehabilitation forms or listened to a widow bemoaning the fact that she could not offer a glass of water to her dying husband.

Alongside the quality of violence was the attitude of indifference on the part of the authorities. It was not merely the shock of phoning the police on the first day of violence and getting a studied non-response. It was the indifference of the State to the act of violence. Appeals for justice or even for an increase in compensation were ignored. The irony of granting an illiterate and unskilled widow a loan at 12½ per cent interest passes all understanding. To it one can add the ignominy of a wife of a leading politician showering her biblical biscuits from a truck.

It was these compounding acts of injustice that revealed the importance of voluntarism to many groups. Members of Delhi University, the Nagrik Ekta Manch and Lokayan understood the sheer hopelessness of appealing to the State. They realized that rehabilitation in this case was not an act of crisis management but called for a continuous social and political dialogue, far beyond the immediacy of rehabilitation. In these movements, they understood the depth of the crisis of the Indian State and, in contrast, the sheer vitality of voluntarism and grassroots activity as an index of meaningful politics. One found that volunteers included many who were members of the administration, even supporters of the Congress Party.

While many felt the need to go beyond the State or party to articulate needs, others insisted on the need to engage in a dialogue with the State, forcing it towards increasing responsibility by granting more substantial compensation and guaranteeing the education of the children of the victims. Several groups felt that given the lumpen nature of the riot not all individuals may be identifiable. Even if full justice was difficult, exemplary justice must be guaranteed, including, in particular, the trial of leaders, local and national, listed in the reports of civil liberties organizations and other groups.

Other groups felt that given the present biases of the State, such a thing may not be possible. As voluntaristic groups, they then decided to

campaign in those constituencies in which Congress (I) thugs had been allotted tickets. Many recognized the practical futility of it, but could not ignore its value in communicating the moral voice of both the affected and the concerned. It is an appeal to a normative order that the present politics of lumpenization and technicization seem to have forgotten.

Complementing this is a more pedagogic function involving an attempt to prevent the gross lumping of communities that current stereotypes enforce. It is necessary to show that Sikh, like Hindu, is a label that hides the diversity of different groups, Mazhabi, Nirankari, Sindhi and Jat. It is necessary to reiterate that few among them backed the terrorist programme in Punjab and that many of the victims in Delhi came from these communities. It must also be emphasized that the Hindu majority is not all 'one lump, wedded to communalism.

Even more painfully, we must confront the idealism contained in groups that followed Bhindranwale or who belong to the Jamaat. As one leading journalist stated in a personal communication to one of the authors, 'Are RSS and Jamaat-e-Islami so bad? Is Nanaji Deshmukh a totally negative and unacceptable figure? In Pakistan, the Jamaat students are being tortured for their struggle against what they call "the heroin-American State"'. It is because I am against these two ideologically, that I am voicing my doubt.'

There is a necessity to open creative spaces where moderation, negotiation and dialogue have a place. One must remind the public of the innumerable times the intransigence of Indira Gandhi upset such negotiated agreement with the Akalis. Legitimacy cannot be reduced to the caprice of the ruler. The structure of State propaganda has reduced the evidence of such pluralistic possibilities.

Many of us also realized the emptiness of secularistic concepts in understanding such a reality. To enforce liberal or Marxist concepts

on these events will not do, as all it produces are tired scripts, the butler-did-it model, the inevitable scapegoats — the RSS and the Jamaat. We face the simple fact that such groups have been upstaged. They have been displaced by the majority party itself as 'protector' of Hindu heartland interests. As one participant said in a recent meeting of intellectuals and activists held in Delhi to ponder over the present situation, 'The communalism of the minority is communalism, the communalism of the majority is called nationalism.'

The tiredness of these outdated scripts comes from imposing the repeated dualisms of western thought on the Indian polity. We had imposed on the political process the opposition between politics and religion. Such dualism in thought leads either to a secular Leviathan or to a theocracy. The secular emptiness of the modern State in complex and plural societies confronts the theocratic power of a Khomeini or a Bhindranwale. By emphasizing organizational structures and ignoring belief, we have failed to capture the innate plurality of these religions and are left with a Hinduism turning Khomeinist.

As Nirmal Verma said at the same meeting, 'Where would Hinduism be without Nanak or Nanak without Hinduism?' Sikhism's roots in Islam must also be emphasized. We must affirm our regard for basic religiosity in man and the religious roots of our search for a sense of common destiny. Otherwise all that we shall produce is either ghettoization of the minority community or, even stranger, the irony of communalism under secularist guise.

The Congress (I) which began as a vote bank of Muslims, Dalits, Adivasis and the rural poor and acted as a check against the communalism of the RSS and the Jamaat has today displaced them as a permanent vote bank, it has turned Hindu communalist, forging instruments of terror against its former supporters. Let us not forget that the greatest violence against the Sikhs was against those who were its supporters. The plaintive cry reported so often was, 'my family have

been Congress supporters for years, so why us?'

III. Conclusion: We can schematize the opportunities before us in any conflict between Centre and State, majority and minority, the normal and the deviant.

Genocide:	Secession:	Assimilation:
1	2	3
Segregation:	Plurality:	
4	5	

At one level is genocide, the complete elimination of the opponent or victim. Its complement in many ways is secession, the decision of a dissident group or minority to escape from the Indian Union. The demand for Khalistan is an instance of this. The danger today lies in the fact that any sign of difference is seen as hostile. The attempt to define all Sikhs as secessionist merely for emphasizing their identity adds to such danger.

One intermediate model that many are seriously considering is a kind of segregationism. This consists either of the ghettoization of the Sikh community in Delhi or the inter-community transfers of population which we are already beginning to witness. The other scenario is one of assimilation. This can be of two kinds. One is the culturally murderous variant where the Sikh gives up all the diacritical marks of his identity and his religion and becomes Hindu. The strange case of a Sikh youth who got himself an 'Amitabh Bacchan haircut' captures the pathos of it. Not coincidentally, his model was the incarnation of violence perpetrated through the media. Or, secondly, we have the secularist process of assimilation where religion becomes negligible as a mark of identity, where the secular alone provides the space for dialogue. Such an emptying out of religion, however, would lead to a tremendous loss of creative power.

This brings us to the only feasible and authentic model of politics possible, at any rate for India, that of the creative encounter of groups religious, linguistic and ethnic. In short, of plurality. In this indeed lies the contemporary contribution of India as a civilization to the meaning and content of democracy.

The initial babel of multi-cultural encounter might lead to the creation of new communities, myths and languages. In that lies our answer to the danger of fascism.

Fascism in many ways is not only an Orwellian newspeak. It is more in the nature of a vitiated language seeking to hide in the noise of slogans. The epitome of such a contrived language was Sanjay Gandhi whose terseness, grunts, idiot-slogans mirrored the decline of language. Consider the arid poetics of such slogans, 'Plan your family', 'one man, one tree', 'marry without dowry' or 'work more talk less'. Or the more lurid texts of those highly provocative advertisements of the Congress(I) during the elections just concluded. Or the speech on the 'last drop of my blood' in turn resonating in the funeral slogans of *khoon ka badla khoon*. And the invocation of *badla* in the maiden public speech of the new Prime Minister. They all attest to the fact that the pathology of politics inevitably reflects itself in language.

This point about perverse use of language is brought out in another ironic twist of recent propaganda: it draws on the language of its opponents. Thus it speaks of order when it seeks to terrorize, of unity when it fosters separation to consolidate power. In fact it also draws on the voice of authentic radicalism, of the marginal poor, of the tribals, even of the socialist imagination. And on top of it all, the incessant build-up of internal and external threats, from an opposition that is made to look like some demonic force out to undermine the country (how, we are never told) and from some 'foreign hand' that has never been defined and for that reason assumed to be effective.

One of the immediate tasks before us is to expose this doublespeak as well as the underlying fascist trend in much of recent populist rhetoric. And to restore the language of open discourse, a genuine dialogue between a plurality of standpoints and cultural streams, and a sense of unity based precisely on this plurality. There is no other way we can rebuild this badly fractured land of ours.

The limits of consensus

MADHU LIMAYE

1984! As the old year gave way to the new we found all our newspapers flooded with tributes to George Orwell. Of course, the western press, as usual, struck the keynote. Innumerable pages were devoted to the theme of his prophecy of a nightmarish 1984. George Orwell had primarily in mind the Soviet world under Stalin when he wrote his famous allegory. That world has changed, if not beyond recognition — for that would be an exaggeration — at least considerably. And it has not moved in the direction in which Orwell predicted it would.

Of course, the structure of a one-party State continued to be the dominant political form in the communist world, that is, even in countries which have broken away from the Soviet Bloc like Yugoslavia,

China and Albania. But apart from internal relaxation in the USSR, the Soviet Bloc has permitted, however reluctantly, a wide measure of dissent in the area of foreign policy (Romania) and also in the sphere of management of national economy (Hungary). To that extent Orwell's forecast has been falsified. The nightmarish days, the midnight knock, so characteristic of the Stalin-Mao era in the communist world are now a thing of the past.

The worst setback to freedom and democracy has been in the countries of the third world. Within a few years of the achievement of freedom most of these countries have switched over to some type of an authoritarian regime or outright military dictatorship. In 1972 the States of South Asia with the exception of the

mountainous States of Nepal and Bhutan, could boast of possessing democratic governments. But this was a short lived phase. Even in India, which restored democratic government in 1977, democracy has taken a few knocks in the Orwellian year 1984. In which direction is the country headed? Authoritarianism, like the rest of the third world, or anarchy and chaos which have been the dominant features of India's history?

In the 2500 years of our known history, India has had only four comparatively brief periods of stable centralised rule: the Mauryan period; the Mughal Empire; the British Rule and the less than forty years of strong central government after Independence. Only the first and the last regimes have been wholly native, springing from the soil. The third one was absolutely alien. The second one was alien in the beginning but had, within three generations, started becoming indigenous. Barring these spells, which total less than 600 years, throughout the rest of 1900 years, India has been a land of warring principalities and regional powers. The recent events fill one with disquiet. Is the fourth period of unified rule fated to be the shortest?

From this point of view, the year 1984, though not so nightmarish as the Orwellian forecast, was not for us a year of light! It was full of dark events, the Assam bloodbath, the Bhindranwale terrorism, the Operation Blue Star, the sordid Andhra drama, Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and the terrible orgy of violence which followed, and finally, the supreme Bhopal tragedy, unprecedented in the history of industrial civilization.

This is the sombre background. Is not the attempt at 'consensus building' foredoomed in this strife-torn country? And what, any way, is a consensus? I have never been enamoured of the game called 'achieving a national consensus'. I have considered it a mirage. I always wondered why the Opposition leaders did not attempt the modest task of 'Opposition consensus' before embarking on the more ambitious project of a 'national consensus'. Let us at least

understand the limits of consensus building.

I must say at the outset therefore that I am a believer in the system of parliamentary democracy which is based on an adversary relationship between the ruling party (whichever it be at the moment) and the parties of the Opposition. I have never approved the Vinoba Bhave aspiration for a polity based on unanimity. The substance of socio-economic programmes are the core of democratic politics and democratic controversies. To try to build a consensus on this is a futile undertaking. It only confuses and befogs the public mind. However, parliamentary democracy pre-supposes not only a superficial agreement on the constitutional framework, but its willing acceptance.

There was no such thing as a Nehru age consensus. The consensus embodied in the basic structure of the Constitution was the legacy of the freedom movement as a whole, not of one individual, however eminent. Nehru's long rule, in fact, was characterised by a steady and 'progressive' departure from this constitutional consensus. To the extent the vested interests and the ruling party abused the various provisions of the Constitution, the consensus broke down.

To give only two examples to illustrate my point: the propertied classes used the judiciary to undermine the consensus in the Constituent Assembly on article 31 on the acquisition of property which it was believed would enable the government to push through the programme of Zamindari abolition to which the national movement as a whole was committed. The consequences were disastrous. It gave licence to the government to tamper with the provisions of the Constitution under a cloak of legitimacy.

The second example is that of Kerala when the PSP, Congress and Muslim League conspired, with the help of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to dismiss an elected government which enjoyed absolute majority in the legislature. This was a violation of the federal principle — a basic feature — and perversion of an emergency provision of the Consti-

tution (article 356). Nehru as Prime Minister and Rajendra Prasad as President cannot be absolved of their responsibility in the matter. (The final abuse was the declaration of Emergency in June, 1975).

The Nehru age was characterised by low temperature politics. Certain classes of society had still not achieved political consciousness (tenants and *kisans*) or were either cowed down — Muslims as a result of the trauma of Partition — or had not yet understood the significance of the power of universal suffrage (harijans, tribals and other backward classes) and they all continued to vote for the Congress. With the abolition of Zamindari and introduction of new agricultural technology, the *kisan* came into his own. In the States of UP and Bihar, the Congress failed to accommodate these forces within its ranks and so its vote suffered erosion in these areas during the Indira era. Lohia was one of those who tried to teach the hitherto docile agricultural communities and backward classes to become assertive. This raised the temperature of politics.

Indira Gandhi's personal sense of insecurity, which she transferred to the political scene, made politics increasingly confrontational. The basic constitutional framework was deliberately undermined to concentrate more and more power in the Centre. Her distrust of the traditional power structure of the Congress made it inevitable that she should come to rely on her progeny. Her attitudes have, as I will show, become universalised. Mrs. Gandhi's aggressiveness was matched by the Socialists' militancy, and the two, between them, set the tone of politics during the late sixties and seventies. It is not without significance that the two most dominant figures of this period were Lohia and Jayaprakash Narayan. The former loved adversary politics, the latter was forced into it.

One unintended result of non-Congressism has been the blurring of policy issues. And the recent decline of parties has brought about the revival of traditional values, how sectional and irrational feelings of community and caste have begun

to acquire hold over the Sikhs, the Muslims and also the Hindus.

It would not be out of place here to refer to certain issues that have been the subject of mutual sniping between the ruling party and the Opposition. There is too much double talk and double standards in the behaviour of political parties. I would like to discuss them with a view to clearing the ground for a new consensus.

The Issue of Dynastic Succession

When we were in the midst of the fight for independence and when politics was not a bed of roses but a summons to action, selfless service and sacrifice, there was no stigma attached to wives, sons and daughters taking part in politics. When Jawaharlal succeeded Motilal as the President of the Congress, nobody raised the question of dynastic succession. He was hailed as 'an illustrious son of an illustrious father.' The Congress 'crown', as Gandhiji called the President's post then, was a crown of thorns and, when whole families threw themselves into the struggle, the people applauded. The arrest of Basanti Devi, C.R. Das's wife, produced consternation in Calcutta and Bengal and the arrest of Kamala (and Swaruprani) not only shook Allahabad but the whole country. I was a schoolboy then, but I was moved by the picture of that frail and suffering woman with an indomitable will.

But things changed after independence. The practice of putting sons or daughters or wives or brothers as candidates in the seats rendered vacant by death began to produce a murmur of protest. When Indira Gandhi was straightaway elevated to the Congress Presidentship, without the kind of apprenticeship which Jawaharlal himself had undergone, Rammanohar Lohia was quick to discern the beginnings of dynastic succession. He proved prophetic. If there was one thing that alienated me from Indira Gandhi the most, it was Maruti, Sanjay and dynastic succession.

But can the Opposition legitimately raise that issue now? When Sheikh Saheb called back Farooq and anointed him as the President of the

National Conference was he not doing exactly what Jawaharlal did in 1959? After his death Farooq succeeded his father smoothly, and fought an election. He defeated the Congress-I and won a two-thirds majority. The Opposition applauded him and invited him to its conclaves.

If the Opposition could swallow the Abdullah succession in Kashmir, what moral right has the Opposition got to shout hoarse over the smooth Rajiv Gandhi succession? It is true the sons of Vasantdada Patil and Ramlakhan Singh and daughter-in-law of Kamalapati and many other relatives of politicians figure in the Congress list. But in Haryana, a son of the leader of the major Opposition party is in the electoral fray. The less one says about the other Opposition leaders' wives and sons and daughters the better. Some of them are being groomed to succeed the leader.

Many politicians thus seem to be busy founding dynasties. We are not a democratic republic really; we are a democratic monarchy! We have sanctified family rule; only we subject it to periodical elections! I find no difference between the Congress and the Opposition on this point. There already seems to be an unacknowledged consensus on this!

Induction of Film Actors and Actresses The Congress involvement of actors and -actresses is deplored by the Opposition and its intellectual sympathisers. But did they not accept N.T. Rama Rao as an honoured invitee to their confabulations? Did they not attend the summits he sponsored in Delhi and Hyderabad? If an election victory can give moral sanction to a Telugu screen personality, will not elections do the same to the Congress cine stars also?

Civilians The Congress brought civilians like C.D. Deshmukh into politics. The Opposition emulated it, especially the Swatantra Party. It had three retired members of the ICS in its parliamentary party in 1967. (H.V. Kamath is a case apart. He resigned from the ICS to take part in the freedom movement).

Judges Some Congress leaders protested against judges being in-

ducted into politics. Morarji himself criticised the Opposition for nominating Subba Rao for Presidentship. But he did not protest when M.C. Chagla was, first, sent as Ambassador to Washington. Morarji served as a member of the Cabinet of which Chagla was also a member.

Getting on Voters' List The Opposition made much of the attempt to get Indira Gandhi's name on the Karnataka voters' list in 1978. But Lal Krishna Advani and others, too, have been changing States every six years to qualify for Rajya Sabha elections! Again a case of the double standard. Or we may, perhaps, say that this is another unadmitted consensus on abusing the provisions relating to the Upper House in Delhi.

Defection Changing parties to grab ministries and power is a bad thing. But who started the game? The Congress did not hesitate to induce defections from the Opposition during 1952-67. Only when defections became a two way traffic (from 1967 on) did the Congress begin to raise a howl. Since the Congress wielded the weapon of defection against the Opposition right from the days of Rajaji, Prakasam and Pattom and since the Opposition also turned the tables on the Congress in 1967 and 1977-78, both should now say that they are quits and agree on a viable anti-defection law which does not establish tyranny of the party bosses. I opposed the Indira Bill of 1973 on this ground and had to oppose the Morarji Bill in 1978 because it too tried to suppress dissent *a la* Indira. I will outline my solution at the appropriate place.

Preventive Detention When the Congress governments passed preventive detention laws, the Opposition rightly condemned it. But when they came into power, they did the same thing. From the days of Pattom Thanu Pillai's PSP Ministry, non-Congress Chief Ministers have been discovering virtues of preventive detention and some of them even passed laws of their own. Jyoti Basu's government, if I am not mistaken, is the only honourable exception. These laws have done much harm and a consensus

should be evolved on their non-use or at least their restricted use within a well-defined area.

The question is whether politics would continue to be overheated and confrontational, or whether the political barometer will record a fall in temperature and politics, while still adversary and competitive, would operate within a common constitutional framework?

Much would depend upon the attitude of the Congress Party, assuming that it would be forming the government after the elections. Questions of the utmost importance for our national survival must come first.

The Composite Nation Can we draw a line between the freedom of every religious and linguistic group under the Constitution and the demand by each of them for being elevated to the status of a distinctive political community, which is another word for separate nationhood? Calls to the Hindus to vote as a community or to vote with a view to promoting Hindu interests, (The Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the RSS Chief are on record as having appealed for this) or to establish pre-eminence of Khalsa (Anandpur resolution) or set up in the east Christian States, or carve out new Pakistans, will undermine the unity of the country. Can an agreement be reached on this very basic thing, and anti-national propaganda shunned on principle?

A consensus should also be attempted on the following.

- (a) A firm understanding on the non-use of the powers of dissolution of a legislature at all for some time, or a general convention that dissolution would be invariably granted by the President and the Governor on demand of the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers.
- (b) If an agreement is reached on non-use, the undermentioned follow-up or complementary measures would be required:
 - (i) synchronisation of all elections — panchayat, municipal, State Assembly and Lok Sabha — to prevent waste

of money, curb corruption and enable political parties to plan ahead and train cadres for different levels of political activity. This would strengthen the party system;

- (ii) an anti-defection law which would not touch the members' freedom of speech and vote, but attach a price to such freedom, namely, denial to dissenters of any post involving material benefit during the term of the house of which he is a member; if parties admit into their ranks representatives who change parties, they should be derecognised for five years.
- (c) State funding of elections and restrictions on the number of posters, handbills, vehicles etc. Total ban on all vehicles on the polling day, except one each for the candidate and his agent.
- (d) Raising the security deposit sum to ten per cent or even fifteen per cent of the maximum limit of permitted expenditure to discourage non-serious candidates, but no prohibition on seeking re-election.

Democratisation of Parties Political parties are the breath of democracy. They mediate between the State and the people. They are the vehicle of people's aspirations. It is through them that these aspirations are turned into policies and programmes. It is through them that activists are recruited; through them they receive their apprenticeship and training. Unfortunately most parties have become moribund. Recruitment and cadre training have ceased, unless recruitment of Youth Congress thugs during the Emergency is to be given the status of cadre and cadre training.

Can political parties be revived? Can they, again, be made live, democratic organizations rather than private fiefdoms of leaders with caste and community base? A leader who has an assured caste or communal following is not subject to any ethical law. He may outrage the moral sense of society, but that would not affect his future because

his partisan supporters will not share the feeling of outrage. This tends to make political leaders unaccountable and, therefore, irresponsible.

Established charismatic leaders, interested in familial succession, are also impervious to enlightened opinion. The Congress was a democratic organization before independence. But it atrophied soon after. It came to depend on one individual — Jawaharlal Nehru. He knew it, and in 1951 easily unseated a democratically elected President.

Mrs. Gandhi split the Congress Party twice. The undivided Congress secured a 40 per cent vote in 1967. After the two splits (1969 and 1978) Mrs. Gandhi secured 42 to 43 per cent vote in the 1971 and 1977 Lok Sabha elections. Why should such leaders, then, bother about democracy, internal elections, committee functioning and so on?

The parties have been suffering from the evils of warlordism at the State level and authoritarianism at the top. Democracy is the casualty. A little reflection will show that both the evils are but two sides of the same coin.

How can a consensus be achieved on the *fundamental* question of democratisation? At the core is the question of funds for running the party and for fighting elections. Leaders have a stronghold over the parties because of their alliance with money power. What is the solution? State funding? Perhaps. But no law can do the trick of making parties democratic. There is a trade union law. Has it ensured democratic functioning of the unions?

Indirect Elections Legislative Councils and the Rajya Sabha are a source of distribution of unhealthy patronage and blatant corruption. In the past, businessmen and rajas used to purchase votes. Now leaders of political parties have adopted this evil practice to get themselves or their cronies elected. Therefore these Houses should be abolished. If a second Chamber is felt to be necessary for other reasons, let their members be elected by larger constituencies, by the whole States.

In the case of very large States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra etc., let them be delimited into two or three regions to form separate Rajya Sabha constituencies. This will lend prestige to the upper house. The least that can be done is to abolish the secret ballot in these elections so that the public knows who voted for whom and draw its own conclusion.

Centre-State Relations What is really wrong is not the Constitution or even its broad distribution of powers, but its abuse. To take the most recent example — the unprecedented action of the Andhra Governor, the Bhaskar Rao group's claim to form a ministry, and their backers in Delhi. They patently abused the Constitution and shocked the moral sense of the entire country. However, under the same constitutional provisions the new Governor, probably supported by wiser central counsel, has acted with absolute propriety in granting the Chief Minister's demand for a dissolution and letting him continue as a caretaker Chief Minister.

Have the Congress interests or Opposition interests been hurt? Not at all; everybody has gained, democracy has been strengthened, and the viability of the Constitution, as rightly interpreted, has been proved beyond all possible doubt. A consensus must be built up on the proper use of article 356, and of the dissolution articles; this will revive people's faith in democracy.

After the Sarkaria panel has submitted its report, a Committee consisting of two Chief Ministers (one Congress and the other non-Congress) and the Central Finance Minister should be set to examine its recommendations on reallocation of financial resources, and the Committee's decision should be unreservedly implemented by the Central Government.

The Punjab Tangle On Punjab an agreement should be reached on the following lines:

- (i) Chandigarh to be the capital of Punjab. Central help to Haryana to build a new capital;

- (ii) the territorial dispute to go to a Commission whose decision should be binding. The criteria for delimitation of the boundary should be: language and contiguity;

- (iii) the river water dispute should go to the Tribunal as provided by the Constitution under the law which has been framed thereunder;

- (iv) the decisions of the Commission and Tribunal should be accepted as binding and final;

- (v) the Opposition must take the responsibility of persuading the Akalis to accept the above settlement. This cannot be done unilaterally, it has to be a bilateral agreement, and neither the Centre — whoever controls it — nor the Akalis should be allowed to wriggle out of it.

The Assam Tangle Personally, I consider that there is no easy solution to the Assam problem. Most of the unfortunate Bengali-speaking people are either refugees from persecution or refugees of economic distress. Nobody can be thrown out. Nobody can be denied his right to vote. No Congress or non-Congress State has offered to take a share of these 'unwanted' people. We have the same problem in Sikkim.

Even the mighty United States has not been able to solve the problem of Hispanics. Every year half a million unauthorised Mexicans and other speakers of Spanish are entering the United States in a clandestine manner. The US has not been able to stop this flow.

Let us be realistic about Assam. Let us give the Assamese modern agricultural technology, more irrigation, more financial aid, more industries. But how can we treat human beings as chattel? I know my views are not popular. This is why I have kept quiet for five years on this issue, but I do not think that consensus can be built up on any other solution. The interminable talks about cut off years leave me cold. I particularly feel sad when I hear former Punjabi Hindu refugees talking about foreigners.

Growing insurgency

GIRI DESHINGKAR

ON the occasion of the Republic Day this year, the Government of India, as usual, will announce gallantry awards to the personnel of the Indian armed forces, the para-military forces and the police. It is, of course, correct to recognize the services of those who have risked their lives for the country. But since 1971, India has not been at war with any foreign country. Where, then, were the acts of gallantry undertaken?

The police forces obviously risk their lives while dealing with criminals and civil disturbances of various kinds. The same is true of the para-military forces, including the Border Security Force which is often called upon to deal with communal riots in the interior of the country. But the army, even when it is called out to contain large-scale communal riots, manages to bring the situation under control without risking lives or using its weapons. There are, however, occasions when it does resort to force — when, for instance, it fights the insurgents in regular military operations. The Republic Day gallantry awards every year are possibly given in recognition of acts of gallantry while fighting the 'enemy' *within* India as well.

The Indian Army has been fighting the Naga insurgents for some 30 years; it has been fighting the Mizo insurgents for nearly 20 years. And its latest assignment was in Punjab in June last year. That operation against the insurgents entrenched in the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar, code-named 'Operation Blue Star', was conceived and carried out almost like a text-book

infantry action. The army units not only used small arms but also hand-grenades, armoured personnel carriers (APCs), artillery and tanks against the insurgents who used some large-calibre infantry arms. The 'enemy' was overwhelmed with fire.

After the action came to an end, the soldiers who had died or wounded in action were rewarded according to the same rules which applied to the casualties in the Bangladesh War of 1971. The only exception was that there were no gallantry awards; thus, the names of those soldiers who risked their lives in 'Operation Blue Star' will not figure in the Republic Day list this year.

The instances given above do not by any means exhaust the list of insurgencies in India. In the past, there have been insurgencies in Telangana, West Bengal and some other parts; inspired by the Marxist-Leninist ideology, they have often been dubbed as 'Naxalite' activities. Although large-scale uprisings of the Telangana and Naxalbari type were put down by the Indian security forces, sporadic 'Naxalite' activity continues to this date in various parts of India.

Lately, yet another set of insurgents, the Tribal National Volunteers (TNV) in Tripura, have joined those in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur. And while the other States of the north-east are free of insurgency as such, Arunachal, Assam and Meghalaya — all have large-scale movements against 'foreigners' which enjoy the broad support of the

'sons-of-soil' in each State; if not handled properly, such movements can take the road of insurgency.

This is not all. Movements for the assertion of tribal rights and for tribal autonomy are spread throughout the length and breadth of India. There are several movements organized by the tribes in the Chotanagpur area. The Jharkhand movement, part of which was secessionist in character, is spread over the tribal areas of Bihar, West Bengal and Orissa. The Ho tribe in Bihar has its own movement. 'Naxalites' have organized tribes in Bihar, West Bengal and Andhra (Srikakulam). The Bastar area in Madhya Pradesh has its own movement for tribal autonomy. The Gonds and Bhils of Maharashtra have been demanding a separate State for themselves. Similar movements exist in South Gujarat (several tribes), Rajasthan (Bhils), Karnataka and Tamilnadu.

Most of these movements are organized around the issues of tribal livelihood and cultural survival. Once again, if the central government and the State governments continue to ignore the demands for tribal autonomy and continue to use force to suppress the movements, they will be pushed into taking up arms against the State. Many of these tribes have a history of armed revolts against the extension of British administration into their areas. The British Army could put them down only after years of bloody warfare.

The happenings during 1984 in Punjab have added a qualitatively new dimension to the insurgency scene in India. The armed revolt there by a section of the Sikhs was no tribal revolt against the non-tribals. It was an act of insurrection by a militant religious brotherhood against the central government which was seen by these Sikhs as ruthlessly suppressing their demands for autonomy with armed might. But more than this, what made the Punjab episode qualitatively different is the fact that it occurred in the heartland of India and smack on the border of Pakistan; the other insurgencies have been taking place in areas which are very far away not only from India's heartland but also

far away from the Indian hearts and minds.

Further, unlike the insurgent tribals, the Sikhs form a significant proportion of India's armed forces; the fact that almost all the arms deployed by the insurgents in Punjab came from Indian sources, that resistance in the Golden Temple complex was organized and led by ex-army personnel and that the mutinies which followed 'Operation Blue Star' were undertaken by serving Sikh soldiers, all go to show the particularly dire threat this insurgency poses for the Indian State.

And, lastly, we have the international dimension of the Punjab insurgency. The insurgencies in the north-east have had some covert support from foreign governments, support which could be eliminated through diplomacy; the Punjab one has militant and open support from a large number of Sikhs abroad who by and large are not directly subject to India's diplomacy. Even if the governments of Pakistan, Britain, Canada and the United States decide to help India as much as possible, support by militant Sikhs abroad cannot be snuffed out.

As this is not an essay on political science, I shall not try to define precisely what an insurgency is and how it differs from an armed revolt, or insurrection or rebellion or terrorism or 'liberation'. One characteristic of the modern State is that, at least in theory, it monopolizes all violence to itself. Insurgency challenges this monopoly and asserts the right of the dissidents to employ violence against the State and its agencies. On the other side of the coin, the State recognizes a situation as an insurgency when it abandons the normal political processes and resorts to the use of armed force against the dissidents as the main instruments of policy.

The actual insurgencies in India — and the political ones — differ from one another in a variety of ways. They have different histories, employ different methods of organization and operation and are of different ideological persuasion. Some in the interior areas of India are single-tribe organizations; those in the north-east incorporate several

tribes in one. The Naga, Mizo and Manipur insurgents rarely attack civilians; but those in Tripura engage in terror-raids against civilians as well. In Punjab, civilians were the prime targets but they were mostly Sikhs who were considered to be the 'betrayers of the *panth*'. Some want total secession and complete political independence. Others want autonomy in various degrees within India. A few are inspired by Marxism - Leninism and Mao Zedong's theories; the others make cultural identity the main issue.

But, despite such complexities, it is possible to view all of them in three broad categories. Those who deny that they were ever a part of the social covenant which produced the Indian State — and its Constitution. The second category comprise those who reject the Indian State and the social system as they are constituted and want to seize State power to bring about a revolution in the social system. The last kind — it is also a growing category — is made up of collectivities which had accepted the premises on which the social covenant was based but have subsequently discovered that it was a bad bargain; they want either a new arrangement or seek to be out of it all.

The north-eastern insurgencies fall in the first category. Their leaders and supporters say that their tribes and territories became a part of the British Empire only through military conquest or, occasionally, through the whims of a 'foreign' maharaja. With the departure of British power, they juridically reverted back to the *status quo ante*. The Indian State cannot *ex cathedra*, claim sovereignty over its people and territories, they say. The various political, economic and social concessions offered by the Indian State combined with 'cease-fires' of various durations have fallen short of their demands.

The insurgencies have continued for decades, tying down large numbers of security personnel with bitterness growing on both sides. Although much is made of American CIA, Chinese and Bangladeshi involvement, the insurgencies seem to have survived primarily through popular local support. The security forces

engaged in counter-insurgency operations have failed to win the hearts and minds of the north-eastern people.

In contrast, the insurgencies inspired by the revolutionary ideology of the Marxist-Leninist type have been largely suppressed by the Indian security forces. Sporadic actions still continue in many parts of India but the Indian State no longer perceives a threat to itself from such 'Naxalite' organization and tactics but with an entirely new ideology based on the Sikh *panth* and aimed at the seizure of State power only in Punjab. Elsewhere in the country, the 'Naxalites' have fragmented into more than 40 rival groups; there is little possibility of their coming together to pose a threat to the Indian State and the social system. Whatever Chinese support there was to the 'Naxalites' was short-lived; it has disappeared now. International support by communist regimes or parties is also insignificant.

The third category of insurgencies is important and serious because it should not have existed in the first place; in fact, however, it is growing. The threat comes from those sections of the Indian people who had once quite happily accepted their partnership in the enterprise which was to make India into a united country. But their perception about what the partnership has achieved has become more and more negative.

A large number of tribes, for instance, have become helpless onlookers to the felling of the forests on which they depended and encroachment on their ancestral lands by 'outsiders' or 'foreigners'. They have been forced to earn their livelihood by working as unskilled labourers in factories set up in their areas and their way of life faces a total and irreversible threat. Development-oriented leaders and officials speak in glowing terms about the 'benefits' — roads, industries, schools, health-centres, radios, etc., — they have brought to the tribal areas and dismiss the destruction of the tribal way of life as the 'cost' of development.

But, the tribal peoples themselves reject the 'benefits' as well as the

'costs'. When attempts at peaceful resistance fail, they take to armed resistance with their primitive weapons. Their initial demand is for autonomy from the administrative and development policies of a very distant State. When this demand is not only ignored but the State sanctions the use of armed force to overcome tribal resistance, the tribal populations are completely alienated from the original tacit partnership; they want to opt out of it.

This is what happened in the case of a part of the Jharkhand movement and the more recent movement for 'Kolhanistan'. Every movement for tribal autonomy carries within it the seeds of insurgency for secession if the Indian State does not come out with anything more imaginative and compassionate than the deployment of para-military forces.

The tribals constitute only 7 per cent of India's population (including the north-east). Of these, perhaps as many as 5 per cent have been 'assimilated' in the course of history. The insurrectionary potential exists, therefore, among only 2 per cent and they are widely scattered in all parts of India. As such, they can be crushed by State power relatively easily.

But, as we have seen in the case of Punjab, the demand for autonomy is not limited to the tribal population alone. 'Mainstream' Indians, organized as they are along religious, linguistic and caste lines, have also formed a perception that the political and developmental processes as they have developed over the last three decades have worked to the disadvantage of their various collectivities. The real issue behind the present debate on Union-State relations is that of autonomy for the States.

On the political plane, the game of 'toppling' State governments and imposing incompetent chief ministers sent from the Centre has been seen as an 'insult' to the people of a State. At the level of development policies, the States find themselves at the mercy of capriciousness at the Centre; development grants are treated as instruments for reward and

punishment for political loyalty or the lack of it. Economically successful States find their surpluses disappearing into what they think of as bottomless pits. At the cultural level, the States outside the Indo-Gangetic plain resent the imposition of Hindi, the mandatory broadcasting of a 'national programme' on television and, lastly, the influx of workers and professionals from other States — the 'foreigners'. The rise of regional political parties on the Indian scene is an expression of the quest for autonomy.

All this is, of course, very far away from a situation of insurgency. But then who could possibly have even conceived of an insurgency in Punjab only ten years ago? Or a Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka even five years ago? Or the Mukti Bahini in East Pakistan 15 years ago? Let us also not forget that the Dravida Kazhagam had adopted a secessionist platform in the 1950s and the 'Razakars' in the State of Hyderabad actually fought the Indian Army in 1948. And if the central government goes on behaving as insensitively and recklessly as it has been of late, can one rule out the growth of a similar pattern in Kashmir?

The burden of the argument here is that while the causes of the first type of insurgency cannot be traced to the State and its policies, the responsibility for the occurrence of the second and third type must be laid directly or indirectly at the doors of the State. And, even about the first category it can be said that the Nagas, the Mizos, the Manipuris and the Tripura 'paharis' (they dislike the term 'tribal') could have voluntarily agreed to join the Indian Union had an imaginative arrangement been offered to them. After all, the United States of America came into being through a voluntary union of its States.

As for the ideologically inspired insurgencies, their leadership may have rejected the Indian State and the social system entirely for theoretical reasons. However, the supporters of these insurgencies fought against real injustices for which the State must be held responsible, at least indirectly, for acts of omission

rather than of commission. And acts of omission, if continued despite fierce resistance, become acts of commission.

Insurgencies of the third type should never have occurred on the Indian scene. The demand for autonomy by the Sikhs in Punjab should never have led to an insurgency. The central authorities may make some mileage out of the Pakistani — and the ubiquitous CIA — connection and 'Sant' Bhindranwale may indeed have been a 'mad monk'. But the fact of the matter is that the Centre was determined to apply the guillotine to demands for autonomy not only from Punjab but from other States as well. Punjab was made the occasion to warn others; it was also unfortunately made a test case for winning widespread Hindu sympathy based on communal backlash against the religious minorities.

If this sounds like an overdrawn conclusion, it would be instructive to once again read the advertisements of the Congress(I) Party released before the elections just concluded. Among other things, these advertisements speak of forces of disunity everywhere in India preparing to roll 'the border to your doorstep'. There is no explanation as to why such forces should have risen to the point of disuniting the country after more than thirty-five years of independence, beyond, of course, the usual references to the 'foreign hand'.

Insurgencies of all these three types have been a very visible part of the post-World War II scene. In western Europe, insurgencies have been going on for several years in Northern Ireland and the Basque region of Spain. The 1960s saw the height of Marxist-led 'national liberation struggles' in Latin America, Africa and Asia. Other types of insurgencies have continued in Burma (the Shan, Karen, Kachin and those led by the two communist parties) and in the Middle East (the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Kurd) since 1948.

Some have emerged successful; they include those in Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea (before the present insurgency), Cuba, Angola, Mozambi-

que, Zimbabwe, Cyprus, Yugoslavia and China. But those in Greece, Malaya, Tibet, Dhofar (Oman), Katanga, Biafra have failed. The more recent ones which are still under way include the two insurgencies in the Philippines, the new one in Kampuchea and those in Angola (a faction which lost), Afghanistan, Timor, West Irian (Indonesia), Western Sahara, Eritrea (Ethiopia) and Sri Lanka and South-West Africa. This is by no means an exhaustive list; it is meant only to illustrate the size and complex nature of the problem.

Incumbents in power routinely blame the 'foreign hand' or its equivalent for such insurgencies. If foreign instigation cannot be blamed, the insurgents are called 'misguided', 'fanatics', 'traitors' etc. Of course, many insurgencies have foreign connections. Those in Guatemala and Cuba (Bay of Pigs) were, for example, entirely engineered by the US, CIA. Others acquire foreign support during the course of their struggle. But a very large number continue insurgency primarily on their own; they enjoy the support of the common people against the State which is seen as alien or oppressive or both.

While bad governance very often creates conditions which promote the rise and sustenance of insurgencies, there is a more fundamental structural cause which accounts for their existence in so many parts of the world. That cause is of the structure of the modern nation-State which has been superimposed on the multi-tribal, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual societies which emerged as politically independent units after decolonization during the post World War II period.

These new nation-States have inherited their borders — some have inherited only vaguely defined 'frontiers' — from their erstwhile colonial masters. In a large majority of cases, these borders divide communities, tribes, peoples and even families. Colonial rule also attracted migrants from other parts of the empire (Chinese in South East Asia, Indians in Africa, for example) who gained privileged positions in these socie-

ties. The result is the same. Almost all these nation-States have multi-ethnic populations — I hesitate to call them 'citizens' — within their borders which have cultural, clan and family ties across the borders. The various ethnic communities have a long history of autonomy which was minimally disturbed by the colonial rulers once the conquest was over.

The anti-colonial 'freedom' and 'liberation' movements eventually succeeded in achieving independence and sovereignty for the colonies, dominions and the Empire (as in the case of India). But the rules of the game changed immediately thereafter. In the post-World War II years, the struggle for 'freedom' and 'liberation' against colonialism became legitimate over the decades. But the aspirations of the autonomous communities for the same kind of freedom and liberation have been considered as totally illegitimate by the rulers of the new nation-States.

The ideological professions of the rulers make no difference to this state of affairs. The early rulers of the Soviet Union accepted the principle of complete sovereignty for the constituent ethnic units of the Czarist empire but very quickly abandoned the principle in practice; today it is as difficult for the Socialist Republic of Georgia (or any other) to secede from the Soviet Union as it is for, say, Katanga from Zaire. The nation-State borders, as bequeathed by the imperial rulers, have become 'sacred'; they have become 'inviolable' not only by external enemies but also by domestic communities in search of total autonomy, i. e., independence and secession. The new nation-States have both external and internal 'enemies'.

That is only half the problem. The leaders of these States, having accepted the nation-State model from Europe, are engaged in the enterprise of 'nation building'. This means creating primary loyalties not only to one State but also to one flag, one capital, one legal code, one language, one system of education, — and often one party. This is an assault on the way in which auto-

mous communities have always conducted their affairs.

Some colonial powers, too, mounted such an assault on the communities in their colonies. The resistance to this could be overcome only with superior force. Today, the resistance is all the more fierce because the rulers are no longer distant foreigners who could be seen as being above all the elements of the society, they are a dominant section of the society who seek to subjugate the others in the name of the 'nation' and 'national unity'.

In India, the ruling party has carried the notion of 'nation-building' to almost absurd limits: loyalty to the Congress(I) Party has become the touchstone of national unity. The Opposition as a whole is seen as a force of disunity but the regional parties expressing regional aspirations even more so. Hence the 'toppling' of the National Conference government in Jammu and Kashmir and the Telugu Desam government of Andhra Pradesh. Hence also the various steps leading to 'Operation Blue Star' aimed at undermining the Akali Party in Punjab.

An ironic aspect of the insurgency scene is that while the rulers of multi-ethnic countries proclaim national unity as a sacred principle, they overtly or covertly sympathise with struggles for autonomy, even secession, in other countries. But sympathy by other States about such struggles in one's own State are totally unacceptable. Thus, India has no hesitation in expressing sympathy for the struggle of the Tamils in Sri Lanka but a similar expression of sympathy for the Sikhs by Pakistan or any other country arouses righteous indignation. Amirthlingam of the TULF in Sri Lanka is a welcome guest in India but similar hospitality to a Phizo or a Laldenga or a Sikh leader arouses the displeasure of the Government of India. This may be what *realpolitik* is all about but *realpolitik* does not produce long-term solutions to basic problems.

The events of 1984 have brought us face to face with the limits of *realpolitik* within the present framework. The State governments of

Jammu and Kashmir and Andhra Pradesh could be toppled through the agency of the governor but not the wishes of the Kashmiri or Telugu people. The insurgencies in 'Kolanistan', Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland can be held at bay through the deployment of the army and the para-military forces.

In Punjab, too, the army can continue to 'assist civil authority' in 1985—and perhaps beyond 1985. It has, after all, been deployed in Nagaland since 1956, in Mizoram since 1966, in Manipur since 1980 and in Tripura since 1982. And in the last four years alone, it has been deployed 18 times for the 'maintenance of law and order' and six times for 'insurgency and anti-terrorist operations.' Can more army, CRPF, BSF and the proposed 'National Guard' be the stock answer to the rising insurgency and insurgency-like activities?

So long as we hold to the notion of building a strong centralized State, *a la* European States, out of our kind of an extremely non-homogeneous society, the conflicting demands of 'nation-building' and autonomy will continue to create conditions which insurgency breeds. Political decentralization, devolving more power to the States of the Union, while absolutely necessary can only be a partial solution. The real challenge before Indian thinkers is to redefine the concept of the Indian State itself. What is needed is an entirely new concept, derived from insights into the extremely diverse nature of the Indian society and arrived at through 'lateral thinking'.

Such a concept will give radically new meanings to notions like 'unity', 'integration', 'sovereignty', and so forth. The Indian civilisation has done well without a political centre in the past. What we have now is unable to provide a framework for civilized coexistence to diverse peoples. If the Indian genius and wisdom can replace the modern nation-State with a more positive and creative arrangement for co-living, not just co-existence with the 'Big Brother' whipping everyone in line, this civilisation will become the pace-setter to a world plagued by growing insurgency.

Fundamentalism

G P DESHPANDE

THE term 'fundamentalism' is often wrongly used in India. Rather, it is used for phenomena which are no doubt related but are basically very different. The term is usually used to describe movements and tendencies which go back to sacred texts or laws and aim to fashion modern day politics and society after them. Zia-ul-Haq of Pakistan, for example, would want what he considers to be the right 'Islamisation' of Pakistan. Imam Khomeini of Iran is another example. It is easy to see that the political meanings of Khomeini and Zia are radically different although both rule in the name of the Allah, the merciful, the bountiful.

However, it would be true to say that their ideologies involve, among other radically different things, a belief and a faith that a number of questions regarding the modern-day world can be answered with reference to the revealed wisdom of the sixth century A.D.

That such a faith persists is an indication of the relative backwardness of a given society and as such should not be fundamentally impossible to combat. That it is so today in several countries asserting different kinds of fundamentalism has less to do with Islam *per se* than with authoritarian and even dicta-

torial nature of political power there. It is important to see the connection between 'fundamentalism' and 'authoritarianism'.

There are, of course, minor forms of 'fundamentalism' quite often seen among the Indian Muslims. An educated Indian Muslim who is quite happy to have a common criminal code with his non-Muslim brethren in this country finds himself unable to see that a 'modern' democratic polity requires a 'modern' civil code. It is, in fact, quite amazing how the subject of a common civil code could become a matter of almost acrimonious dispute in this country. To some extent, Muslim fundamentalism is responsible for this phenomenon; although obviously it is not the only reason. The recent demand by some Sikhs that they too should have their own personal law is another illustration of fundamentalism; albeit coming from a totally unexpected quarter.

If we take this sense of fundamentalism (which is really the correct meaning of the term) i.e., going back to a text or a group of texts to devise modern polity, law, economy and so on, it can be safely averred that there can be no Hindu fundamentalism. No section of the Hindus is ever going to ask that the Brahmins or any other *varna* for that matter, must perform duties as laid down in the *Smritis*. Or that they should not drink alcohol and so on. Even the RSS would not insist on such prohibitive aspects (all 'fundamentalism' is a lists of 'don'ts').

Not all *Smritis* say the same thing either. Fortunately, the so-called Hinduism, if there be such a religion, does not have a text to which the modern fundamentalists can turn to with any degree of confidence. These are the small mercies of the religions of the extreme East. This also is true, for example, of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Jainism and (until recently) Sikhism as well.

But there is another sense in which the term fundamentalism is used in our country. This use is

not very accurate but, may be for want of a better or more familiar term, we may continue with its usage. Used in this sense, fundamentalism implies 'consolidation of communal consciousness' and, paradoxically, the use of communal or religious identity for largely secular (but no less backward-looking) purposes.

The paradox might need further elaboration. To an extent this paradox exists even in Khomeini's politics. It would be nobody's argument that the Khomeinis or the Zias of the world are in fact creating the *Nizam-e-Mustafa* in their respective lands. They are also herding their hapless and captive subjects into an army labouring endlessly for the benefit of people whom God, if there be one, would certainly disown. But the articulation of interests by the regime leaders, actual attempts at least in some areas to return to the texts and other features, make the paradox less than visible.

In the other kind of fundamentalism, the paradox is quite glaring. Jinnah asked for a separate 'State' for Indian Muslims. In other words, he was using a communal consciousness for a secular purpose, i.e., for the creation of a modern State. There is little evidence, if any, to suggest that Jinnah would have liked to go back to the 'Shariat' or anything of the kind. His interest related to 'Muslims' and not to 'Islam'. It is possible to see that many Hindu nationalist leaders were quite 'modern' in their outlook. Savarkar and Jinnah are perhaps the perfect examples of leaders who attempted to use 'communal consciousness' to a secular purpose thus exemplifying the 'paradox' we have been talking about.

II

It would be useful at this stage to introduce the caveat that the 'secular' purpose of which communal consciousness becomes an instrument, does not nevertheless make that kind of politics less dangerous. It operates on the logic of numbers and takes it for granted that 'certain numbers' are inconvenient. The thrust of that politics is quite clear. Keep what you have

and grab what you do not. If the consolidation of communal consciousness is going to help you monopolise the resources or gains from development, use it with abandon. Riots are the best weapon towards this end. But there are others too. These weapons include the most cynical use of the media, the educational system, the political and educational opportunities and so on. A stage is prepared then when secular articulation of politics becomes impossible.

As somebody said on the Punjab situation recently: 'There are only Hindus and there are only Sikhs; there are no Punjabis in Punjab.' I cannot say that if the author of this remark would agree with me but what he said demonstrated in a telling manner what the recent riots in Delhi and elsewhere have achieved. His remark sums up what I call the consolidation of communal consciousness which could last for quite a while. The process, of course, has been going on for some years now. And as it was going on, all responsible opinion just turned a blind eye to it.

There is yet another aspect of the problem. There is a tendency to analyse the 'consolidation of communal consciousness' purely in loose, unscientific terms. This has resulted into stereotypes which, although not altogether meaningless (let alone stereotype, even a caricature has a meaning), are not very useful. One such example is the 'majority-minority' relationship. The fact of the matter is that it is the minorities—minorities in various communities, that is—which are involved in any communal situation. There is no such thing as Hindu majority communalism. A majority of Hindus (if there be such a community) or of Muslims or of Sikhs is *never* involved in riots nor is it a victim of communal psychology quite on a scale which we all seem to take for granted. The majority-minority duality is true always and necessarily in a given area and in the context of a given community of that area.

There is no evidence that the South Indian Hindu was involved in the recent Bombay riots (whereas

Shiv Sena volunteers reportedly were) or that the large number of Hindus coming from the South of the Vindhyas or from eastern India were actually involved in the Delhi riots. The point is that it does not seem to me meaningful to talk in terms of majority and minority without specifying its local meanings in any analysis of communal riots.

It is also equally erroneous to speak of communal consciousness in reactive terms. To be sure, one communalism feeds the other. The reactive element is not altogether irrelevant. But over the years all communities have learnt to use it and the reactive argument itself has become a weapon of fundamentalism. Why are the Hindus communal? Because the Muslims are communal. Why are the Muslims communal? Because the Hindus are communal. Now, the arguments are not invalid in themselves. But they build a vicious circle which secularists can never break and which communalists can always capitalise on. Indeed, they have been doing that with the greatest of skill, tenacity and dedication.

This vicious circle can be broken only if the reactive argument is suspended. 'Communal consciousness', *no matter what the provocations are*, has to be battled against. It cannot be fought if its origins are traced to the phenomenon which is outside the control of a given community. In any event, it is not either logical or realistic to suggest that had it not been for the communalism of the 'other' community, all would have been well with the secularism of the community under discussion. But the old ways of thinking are still very dominant. From the beginning of this century we have been saying the same things and the fundamentalism or consolidation of communal consciousness goes on unabated. The reactive argument has resulted in a situation wherein all communalists make merry!

Before we conclude this section, a reference may be made to the magic '*mantra*' which seems to explain everything about communalism in this country. The '*mantra*' is to be said several times over when

communal disturbances occur. By saying that *mantra*, so the neo-Brahmins of this country think, they have done their duty to secularism. This '*mantra*' consists in talking loudly about the RSS, the Hindu Maha Sabha, the Jamaat-e-Islami and other such organisations.

That these are patently communal organisations would hardly need elaboration. But who has bred the climate over the last forty years which is so clearly responsible for communal holocausts? It seems to me doubtful that all these hateful instruments had the power to do so. They surely are the instruments. But then neither the RSS nor the Jamaat was involved in the November holocaust in Delhi. Who caused it?

No, the point is not to identify people or to identify politicians. The point simply is that while the *mantra* was being faithfully chanted, the ethos was slowly changing. Those who presided over the changing ethos have done precious little to give direction to that change. The crumbling of the structure of Indian nationhood cannot be the doing of some fringe, lunatic groups. You may blame them as much as you like. The fact of the matter is that these organisations are not the main enemy. They cannot be. They are enemies all right. But a bigger enemy is somewhere out in the open. In fact, the enemies of secularism are all wearing cloaks of secularism and are out on the prowl.

III

This brings us to politics. The fundamentalist tendencies have been generated and developed by the politics of the last thirty seven years, the period during which we have been reasonably 'free' and 'autonomous'. This is the period during which we have had a successful nuclear implosion, a couple of men in space, a middle-power status certainly since 1971, trained technical manpower and technological expertise which could be a matter of pride for any developing State. The Congress-I election advertisement says that we have a higher rate of growth than even the United States. Meaningful or otherwise, these claims would suggest that the ruling classes here

look at their achievements with considerable pride and satisfaction. It must however be added to their achievements that they have presided over a process of consolidation of communal consciousness of various hues and colours, mainly saffron and green, in this country.

The problem of communalism in this country is always reduced to the existence of 'communal' parties as against 'secular parties' both by the academics as also the journalists. It is legitimate to ask at the end of thirty seven years how meaningful this classification has been. Not even that. Perhaps it is time to say that the entire problematics of 'consolidation of communal consciousness' has to be differently posed. It is not an ideology of a party. It is an ideology of the ruling classes.

Had it not been so, the media would not have been so infused with the communal spirit. The AIR sings praises to gods of all variety. The news-readers are required to report that the Id, the Diwali, the Nanak Jayanti, the Mahavira Jayanti, the Buddha Purnima and so on are all celebrated with cheer and joy. There is no doubt that they are. The issue is that it is not a modern State's function to report on its radio that they are.

Talking about the radio, let me state that I do not share the frequently aired objection to *Bhakti* poetry being played on the Akash Vani. After all the early and medieval poetry in almost all Indian languages is *Bhakti* poetry. What is objectionable is that it is not presented as poetry but as a sop to communal consciousness. Let me illustrate how it is done.

Every morning on Pune Radio, for example, there is some fine singing by such stalwarts as Bhimsen Joshi, Vasant Rao Deshpande, Lata Mangeshkar and others. They usually render an *Abhanga* of Jnaneshvara (13th century) or Eknath (15th), Tukaram (17th century) and so on. In my opinion, there is nothing wrong in it. It is the finest poetry written in Marathi. What the AIR does, however, is that one composition of Tukaram is followed by the one by some contemporary second

rate poet. This juxtaposition is very crucial. That makes the entire programme not of poetry because it is preposterous to put a rank third rate poet like Sudhanshu with Tukaram, but of Hindu consciousness. The poetry recedes to the background. The communal consciousness comes to the fore.

Equally misguided was the resistance to Gur Bani on the radio. Yes, it is religious at one level. It is Sikh and so on. But at another level it is not. It is simply Punjabi. There was no reason why our media could not have used the Gur Bani to consolidate the *Punjabiya* and through it the *Bharatiya*. They did not. These have been cited as examples of what the State could have done and failed to do. Further, this failure is not entirely fortuitous.

Religiosity and communalism are not the same thing. But the former can turn into the latter. A western educated secularist might want all religiosity thrown out of the window. That's a sure way of heightening communal consciousness. In this country, either that has happened or, alternatively, through very stealthy forms, consolidation of communal consciousness has been achieved. One suspects the ruling classes need it. The more primordial the issues of struggle, the more certain is their rule.

One of the most unfortunate results (and there have been many) of the recent disturbances in Delhi that I have observed is that many hitherto liberal and secular Sikhs have demonstrated almost a fundamentalist urge of 'going back' to everything that a Sikh should claim as his. Now, given the trauma of November, this fundamentalist reaction is perfectly understandable. But, what is understandable is not necessarily desirable.

This has happened because in India, fundamentalism has also been a function of alienation of a social group or groups, which it is not, for example, in a society like Iran's. Khomeini after all led a valiant attack against the tyranny of the Shah. The 'fundamentalism' was both an instrument and the end-product of that struggle. May be, it was the re-

sult of its inadequacies. May be, at this historical conjuncture this is a tragic but inevitable stage in Iran's history.

Here, in our country, however, fundamentalism springs from the real or imaginary (yes, in some case it is imaginary. Dr Chauhan's fulminations in London are a good example of an alienation almost self-imposed) causes. The result is inevitably disastrous: one more group is driven out of the struggle for democratic rights and so on. The problem in the Punjab for the last half century has been that there has been no 'Punjabi' politics in the true sense of the term. Nobody would let it grow. What we see now is one more example of the same process.

Fundamentalism in either sense promotes conservatism, stagnation and, of course, breaks the basic unity of the people. People cease to be people. They are then known by the primordial labels which they wear or their self-styled leaders make them wear. There is no getting away from the fact. The ruling classes and the ruling party must share the blame for this tragic denouement.

IV

This discussion would be incomplete without its international aspect. It sounds far fetched to suggest that 'fundamentalism' in India has foreign patrons. But it is not. The system creates alienation. There is no sound power reason to believe that big powers would not play with it. Indeed they do. The Left puts the matter not too inaccurately but rather simplistically when it blames 'Imperialism' for what has come to pass in our country. Translated in power terms it does not sound unconvincing. It is the business of big powers to fish in troubled waters. In a post-second world war world, it is also their business to see that the waters in the developing world which are trouble-prone, given their state of development, are kept in a troubled state.

If the Soviets sounded as if they were talking nonsense when they were seeing CIA's hand everywhere in India, it would be equally naive to suggest that for some benevolent

reason the agency is not active in India. It is a fact that the majority of the Sikhs have never been in sympathy with the cause of Khalistan. Where then did all the money come from? And surely there is no lack of evidence that Bhindranwale and his ilk were well funded. Who paid them? Who gave them the weapons?

It is useful to remember what Bhukharin pointed out already in the thirties that no 'national' question is entirely national these days. It is true that the questions can still be handled carefully domestically. That is the only way of keeping the big powers at bay. But it is not a one-way process. Big powers may not oblige you. Certainly their involvement in the 'consolidation of communal consciousness' in this country has not been insignificant. In the last analysis, you cannot tackle the fundamentalist problem domestically and in isolation. It will require a clear understanding of the international situation.

Perhaps we have missed what Mao Zedong so often talked about. 'It is good to have an enemy', he said. We have had, of course, our small enemies and our foreign policy takes particular pleasure in keeping the small enemies as enemies. Mao Zedong was talking of a 'big' enemy. Mahatma Gandhi's India had an enemy. That united the country. A few good years of nation-building resulted from that struggle. Since 1947 our ruling elite has come to terms with an international system in the fond hope that by doing so national contradictions will automatically disappear. They have not. From Iran to Pakistan to India, internal turmoil and external involvement have gone hand in hand. In our land, fundamentalism is one form of internal turmoil. No matter how hard we try, it is not possible to separate that turmoil from external involvement in the last analysis.

But only 'in the last analysis'. There is a lot of ground to be covered domestically. Unfortunately, our ruling elite seems either unwilling or unable to face the problem and its own culpability squarely. Unless that happens, the march of this hapless nation to disaster cannot be stopped.

A dialogue for today

SATISH SABERWAL and
HARJOT SINGH OBEROI

FOLLOWING the grievous assassination of our Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi, and the rioting and killing that have followed, a great many very curious ideas are being heard. These give evidence of rigid, unthinking habits, with severely simplified views of social groups which in fact are very complex. We have had complex institutions and very complex historical experiences. These are being distorted into stereotyped ideas which misinterpret our past and our present dangerously.

It is of the greatest importance at this time to recognise the full complexity of the social process through which we are passing. We are facing many unintended consequences of ordinary, harmless, day-to-day processes which have built up over the years and decades.

We should remember that we have shown poor historical judgment in the past. It was this lack of judgment and discrimination which led to our succumbing to colonial rulers in the 18th century. Nehru had something of this sense of history, of what happened in the past—in India but also worldwide—and how we came to be where we are. That sense of history has to be cultivated, and not by historians alone, for it provides the only record possible of actions and their

consequences over the long term, the only available record of experience on which to hone a sense of historical judgment.

We should also remember that political assassinations have happened in history before. Not so long ago, President Sadat was murdered in somewhat comparable circumstances in the United Arab Republic. In such contexts it is important to face the crisis with cool heads. It does not help any one to respond to them with frenzies of madness.

It is because of these considerations that Satish Saberwal, who teaches at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Harjot Singh Oberoi, a research fellow at the Australian National University, two friends who have known each other for twelve years, decided to have a dialogue to try to judge our present situation and to trace the alternatives before us for the future. The bulk of this text was produced on one day early in November. This dialogue may be of interest to our fellow citizens regardless of their religious or political affiliations.

Harjot Singh Oberoi: We are presently faced with a catastrophic situation which many of us are comparing with the crisis the country faced during the partition. Satish,

what factors do you think led to the present situation?

Satish Saberwal: I think one can see it emerging over the short-term, and also there have been other longer term processes, which have contributed to it.

Thinking first of the short-term, as you know, there was the build up in Punjab which ended with the events in the Golden Temple at Amritsar on June 4/5, 1984. This build up you have told me earlier, was the result of competition between different groups within Sikh society who were trying to outbid each other, who were trying to score political points in relation to each other, by being less and less compromising in relation to what was proclaimed to be an outside agency, namely, the Government of India.

This is a fairly widespread pattern in our country, where different groups in an organisation turn upon the authority. They declare that any compromise with the authority would be a surrender. So, the several groups can outbid each other, and this can keep on building up until there are instances of violence, perhaps the police have to be brought in or other drastic action taken. Here, at Jawaharlal Nehru University we had a situation like that last year. What happened in Punjab, in some ways, was a similar process magnified a million times.

Following the events in the Golden Temple, a fraction among the Sikhs continued its mindless course. The assassination of our Prime Minister is, of course, deplorable beyond words. Some foolish people reacted unwisely to this among both Sikhs and Hindus; and this stupid early reaction has been exaggerated beyond measure. Of this situation hoodlums took advantage. Under cover of attacking Sikhs, there was a great deal of plain looting and, generally, lawlessness took over.

Over the longer term, it seems to me that in our society there have been several lines of separation. There is the separation between the caste groups and also between the different religious groups. Generally, we have all learned to live reason-

nably well with each other. We have lived well together for centuries. But there is also a tendency to exploit religious differences and to build up tension upon them when that is possible.

Harjot: As a sociologist do you think these factors you enumerated contributed to the rioting all over the country on the 31st October 1984 and the days that followed, or was it the fury of the poor urban classes directed against a segment of the urban population which has come to control sizeable resources?

Satish: Yes, Harjot, it has been a complex phenomenon. There was the immediate grief at the assassination. The tragic thing is that this grief was perverted into a frenzied orgy, wholly unworthy of any civilisation. One particular group was singled out for attack because of recent events in Punjab and also because of foolish, momentarily provocative acts. Religious beliefs and identities are always subject to different kinds of interpretations. Only a generation ago Hindus and Sikhs acted like brothers during partition. The violence between Muslims and others then was no less tragic than what we have seen recently. But it only goes to show that singling out religious groups, and saying that one group is made up of patriots and another of traitors, this is fickle and mindless.

It is becoming clear too that on that Wednesday, or the day following, some signals went out from influential politicians. Certain MPs' inflammatory activity in their localities is well established by now; at what level the signals originated awaits determination. These signals may have caused, or been only convergent with, the apathy — or the anti-Sikh aggression — of the police. Given these signals, the lumpens of the cities saw their hour. In this overall context, the ordinarily latent communalism of large parts of the middle classes came to be crystallized too.

Harjot: It is being suggested to me that the rioting, particularly in Delhi, had a discernible pattern both in the targets chosen and the way the rumours which infuriated the civil

population spread. The anonymity of large cities was quickly lost, Sikh houses, businesses, and institutions pinpointed. Similarly, rumours were spread systematically, implicitly inciting immediate reprisals. For instance, without any basis, it was rumoured that train loads of dead bodies belonging to a particular community were coming in from Punjab. Similarly anonymous phone calls warned Delhi residents of the water supply having been poisoned. Satish, does this pattern, especially with your first hand experience of Moradabad riots in 1980, suggest any organised effort on the part of certain groups in our society?

Satish: Sure, Harjot, you know it strikes me that we Indians are the world's most experienced people in the matter of communal riots. Today these hit the Sikhs, recently the blows have fallen on Muslims, in Maharashtra the Shiv Sena has attacked South Indians and scheduled castes, and the list could go on. We never know whom this demon is going to strike next. It could be my turn tomorrow.

You are quite right about rumours. Shortly after what happened in Moradabad in 1980, my friend Mushirul Hasan and I went there to understand how it built up, and it was the same pattern. Anonymous phone calls about poisoned water supply. There was one rumour, absolutely without basis, that a temple and its priest in the city outskirts had been killed by Muslims. People believed it, and a Muslim colony was wiped out. Out of such rumours are riots made. We believe everything we hear when we are in a frenzy. We lose our judgment. It is vital that we learn to discriminate between fact and fiction; the more so under stress and tension. Every one's survival depends on others keeping a cool balance.

Harjot: We have noticed that in the last decade there has been an increasing tendency to resort to force and terror in all kinds of contexts. Satish, do you have something to say about this new factor of political terrorism within the country?

Satish: I think, Harjot, you have touched something fundamental.

Every society has this problem of violence. The difference between civilised societies and uncivilised ones is that civilised societies have learned to raise their children so that they would act with discipline; they have learnt to control the use of force, and to apply it — in a disciplined manner — only when there is no other course available. How controls over the use of everyday violence were established in Europe is something that I'll come back to in a moment. Maintenance of order in our large-scale, subcontinental society was an achievement initially of the colonial State in India. It was associated with certain disciplines, especially in the manner in which the State's power and authority were exercised. These disciplines have been giving way in recent years. Use of force and of arbitrary power have been growing all round. These recent events mark a long jump along this disastrous course.

Right now I want to ask you something else. What I find astonishing is that historically Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab have had very close relationships. My grandmother came from a Sikh family. So I am part-Sikh. There are many families with close ties of kinship. A great many Hindu families accept the *Granth Sahib* as their own religious text. The *Granth Sahib* has many couplets taken from the writings of Hindu saints and others. How then has this astonishing breach between the Hindus and the Sikhs come to be, so quickly, in your reading of the situation?

Harjot: Satish, it is essential to recognise that the Sikh religion was part of the medieval Sant tradition in North India. The teaching of the Sikh Gurus was heavily influenced by the Bhakti saints like Kabir and Namdev. Subsequently the emerging Sikh community kept on relationships of *roti* (eating together) and *beti* (daughter, that is to say relationships of marriage). Within my own family three of my father's sisters are married into Hindu families; but all of a sudden it appears that these relationships of *roti* and *beti* may not continue!

The major reason for such a possible break lies within the dual idiom

of politics in the Sikh community. Right from its inception the Sikh community has had two distinct poles of political behaviour. One, shall we say, is 'civil political', which involves setting up alliances outside the Sikh community. We saw this in 1956 when Master Tara Singh agreed to dissolve the Akali Dal and join the Congress mainstream with his followers.

But, simultaneously, there has been a fringe political framework which has always sought to dislodge the civil political tradition. This fringe found a ready strategy in the slogan of Khalistan. So the present conflict in a sense is one of power and leadership within the Sikh community and this perhaps explains the rapid ascendancy of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who in less than two years came to dominate the Sikh political stage. He had been an ordinary preacher in Amritsar district. In the 1979 SGPC elections, the 32 candidates he supported all lost. In outbidding each other, Sikh political leadership found it expedient to mark out their traditional Punjabi neighbours into adversaries. The whole historical tradition was distorted to demonstrate how Hindu-Sikh animosities have always existed. In August 1982, the Akali High Command switched its strategy from a largely secular-political one to that of *dharm yudh*. So it is this communal ideology which drove a sharp wedge between Hindus and Sikhs despite close kinship and shared traditions.

Also, the green revolution, while generating immense wealth, has also sharpened inequalities. Small Jat-Sikh farmers with two to four acres of land have lost out to the big farmers. They have been under pressure to sell their small holdings as these proved to be uneconomic. It is they who saw in Bhindranwale's anachronistic teachings hope for their struggle to hold on to their frail agrarian position. Fundamentalism created in them a vision of a golden epoch which would be exclusively Sikh, denying Hindus the supposed advantages they enjoyed in Punjab. The notion of discrimination against Sikhs became a firm conviction for them; and a previously

miniscule organization, the All-India Sikh Student's Federation, suddenly found its ranks swelled by one-time students who are now the urban unemployed in Punjab.

Satish: Tell me, Harjot, how did an essentially villager's view of the world — or, rather, a bigot's version of that view — come to prevail so widely among the Sikhs? We know how notable the Sikhs have been for their spirit of enterprise, for their wide-ranging experience, for their good judgment, for their achievements. Why have they not been able to exercise more discriminating judgment in this matter?

Harjot: Although Punjab has often been described as the mini-Germany of India, essentially it is still rural society. The bulk of Sikhs in the State is in the countryside. This has always been so with the Sikhs, especially the Jats, the dominant caste among Sikhs. These rural moorings, plus high illiteracy, have prevented the emergence of an alternate way of recognising the reality around. Consequently, many Sikhs continue to see 20th century events with categories inherited from the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Such a view of the world is prepared while one is growing up. In the family, Sikh symbols and heritage are strongly infused.

With this background, it is not strange that Bhindranwale found an easy chord to strike within the Sikh masses. Basic support for him initially was in the *majha* (between Beas river and the Pakistan border), long considered the cradle of the Sikh community. It was here that the Sikh Gurus, specially Ramdas, founded the Golden Temple around which grew up the city of Amritsar. Subsequently, to pay homage at this gurudwara became a central ritual of the Sikhs. Out of this grew the convention that whosoever controlled the Golden Temple would also hold sway over the Sikh community.

This was realized as much by Ranjit Singh as by his successors, the British administrators. On annexing Punjab in mid-19th century, they made sure that they held supreme control over the affairs of

Amritsar. They strongly resisted Akali efforts in the 1920s to take control of the temple and its affairs. This very tradition helped Bhindranwale gain ascendancy within the Sikh community. Once he started living within the Akal Takht, his voice became supreme and began to determine the political fortune, not only of Punjab but, with hindsight one may say, also that of India.

Satish: What puzzles me is that this kind of thing could not happen in Hindu society. There are Hindu sacred centres like Hardwar, Baharas, etc., but I doubt whether control over any of them would establish anyone as a dominant political leader among Hindus. The Shankaracharyas carry very little political weight. How do you explain the importance of this sacred centre within Sikh society?

Harjot: Much like Islamic tradition, the Sikh Panth has really never separated the two domains, the political and religious. Therefore, theoretically, the Sikh Panth should be guided divinely in all matters. This divine direction comes from the Sikh scripture which is perceived as normative for all time and in all places. The sixth Sikh Guru, Hargobind, who established the Akal Takht next to the Golden Temple, wore two swords. One, to signify *miri* i.e., politics, and the other *piri*, i.e., religion. It was precisely this framework which facilitated the rise of the Sikh movement from the 17th century onwards. It is perhaps this which accounts for the success of the Sikh Shankaracharyas. The Akali Dal has launched all its political agitations from within the gurudwaras. *Dharam-yudh* for political objectives is central to the mobilizing strategy of the Akali Dal.

The Akalis have thus tapped some fundamental Sikh appeals in order to mobilise committed opposition. They have succeeded in so doing not by manipulating religious slogans and sanctions extraneous to peasant social life and consciousness but by invoking, and providing, apparent social embodiment to certain ideal Sikh principles to which many among the peasantry are committed.

Many Sikhs recognize that they are poorly educated peasants, unfamiliar with Sikh theology and isolated from sources of religiosity. They are aware of their own shortcomings as Sikhs, in both knowledge and formal observance. But by occasionally renouncing, during the Akali morchas, their narrow interests and short-term gains, Akali supporters among the peasantry can experience themselves as approaching those ideal standards of Sikh conduct that, ordinarily, they remain far from attaining. During the morchas the Sikh laity finds means to cleanse itself of impurities that it has gathered in the course of daily life. For a brief period, it can realise the unfulfilled religious potentialities that the Sikh Gurus had enunciated.

In as much as they seemingly embody higher interests, the Akalis and Bhindranwale are seen to represent the cause of Sikhism itself. As the Sikh peasantry supports that cause in sincerity and apparent selflessness, they willingly volunteer for the Akali *dharm-yudh*.

Satish: You know, Harjot, when you say that politics and religion have not been separated in Sikh society, this idiom really comes from Europe. We should not say that politics and religion have been separated in Hindu society. If we think of medieval India, Rajput and Maratha kingdoms were based upon mobilising caste groups in the main. So the separation of State power from religion there was more by default than because of active secularization. The process during the colonial period was certainly different, but we need not go into that.

What I want to ask you now is why a sense of community should come to be so much stronger among the Sikhs than it has been among Hindus? You have been a student of Indian society as a whole in sufficient depth that I would like to hear your ideas on this.

Harjot: We have to be cautious in looking at the Sikhs as a community. Recent events have tended to exaggerate their unity and overlook the differences of caste, sects, and historical experiences of the different

segments. For instance, the rivalry between Jat Sikhs and Khatri Sikhs has been proverbial. Although all the 10 Sikh Gurus were Khatri, the Jats tend to be dismissive of this constituent of the community. The Jats and the Khatri together looked down upon the Mazhbi and the Ramgarhia Sikhs. So it is far easier for external observers to discern a unity within the Panth which only exists at certain institutional levels, especially that of the *sangat* (congregation) and the *pangat* (collective dining). These combined with the Sikh gurudwaras have injected this sense of a community. Out of this has emerged that sense of community consciousness which, along with the Sikh symbols and the centrality of the Adi Granth, has made the Sikh community stand out within the Indian Republic.

Satish: Yes, this sense of community is similar to the Christian sense of community, which is connected with taking the communion together in the Church. Would you agree that this sense of community centred around the gurudwara has helped Sikhs in their sense of confidence and venturesomeness? One can go out confidently wherever one expects to find an opportunity and there find welcome in the local gurudwara. Their counterparts who are not Sikhs would perhaps feel more inhibited about going far away?

Harjot: Satish, you are very correct in tracing a connection between the community ethos of the Sikhs and their mobility. Anywhere the Sikhs have gone, the first thing they have done is to set up a gurudwara. If the resources are lacking, this may even be set up at a private house. With improved economic circumstances the gurudwara is greatly elaborated and becomes the nucleus of the local Sikh community. If resources permit there is further expansion in the form of Khalsa schools and colleges. While this has certainly helped Sikh mobility, the Sikhs have never had a taboo on moving out of Punjab. In fact, I suspect that their identification with Punjab is a fairly recent phenomenon.

Sikh communities have existed in Afghanistan, Iran, Bihar and Maha-

ashtra since the 16th and the 17th centuries. So the mobility was there early, and then through the colonial period the British army took them further afield. The growth in the Empire provided the Sikhs with an additional network of migration. But the greatest displacement of the Sikh population took place with the partition which compelled them to disperse all over India in order to make their fortunes afresh. In facing this tragic resettlement, once again the community ethos provided the essential basis for a vigorous pursuit of new economic and political interests.

Satish: Shall we say then that because of this sense of community, at least in some regions, there remains a sense of separateness between the Sikhs and the local people? Other migrant groups would have been a little less conspicuous in this separateness perhaps. The Sikhs may stand out because of their symbols and the institution of the gurudwara?

That of course leads me to bring in something of what has been happening on the Hindu side in recent years. We have here a great ancient tradition which has flourished with numerous sects and priests and *sadhus*, but which has also had an historic difficulty over attaining a sense of community: a difficulty rooted in the caste system which fostered a very strong sense of community within a *jati*, but also separated the *jatis* rather firmly and made an overall sense of community — such as arising in the Christian communion or the Sikh *sangat* — very difficult to achieve.

At various times in recent centuries, Hindus have felt themselves in competition with and under pressure from Islam, Christianity and Sikhism; and in this context there was, in the late 19th century, much striving for internal reform and reorganization: the rise of the Arya Samaj in Punjab and elsewhere, the Ramakrishna Mission in Bengal, the Satya Shodhak Samaj in Maharashtra, and so forth. These several movements have not been able to sustain the early momentum into the more recent decades, but we can't go here into the question why. Gandhiji

was an expression partly of Hindu religiosity; but his political and other engagements were too various for him to have had the kind of prophetic focus that a great religious figure would have had to have.

Consequently, it would seem, there has been among Hindus in recent decades a certain waning of the religious impulse such as can arise only from a shared feeling for the sacred. Substituting for the true religious impulse, there has instead been a reactive assertiveness, against conversions as in Meenakshipuram and elsewhere, against the lower castes as in Marathawad and Gujarat, and against sundry other adversaries elsewhere. Ekātmata Yagya, the bid for recovering 'Ram bhoomi' in Ayodhya, and similar activities are part of this effort. In these latter one senses a certain striving for the spectacular. It fosters a sense of the Hindu mass, poised to take on all comers. Missing here is that insight into the human condition, that sense of outreaching love and togetherness, that genius for creating forms of local community appropriate to its age — which have marked the great religious sparks in history. For such sparks, perhaps, our times are unpropitious?

But there is something else in what you said, Harjot, which interests me. Much of the earlier movement of Sikhs outside Punjab was connected with the colonial regime. The colonial State established a unified political and administrative framework in this whole sub-continent for the first time. The State in India as we know it today was a gift of colonial rule. Would you agree with that?

Harjot: Yes, the establishment of the British Empire in India completely changed the course of the Sikh community. In 1849, the Lahore State carved out by Ranjit Singh became a part of the British Raj. Sikh leadership was quick to realise that they had no option but to live within the Empire. This started the long imperial romance between the Sikh and the Raj. Sikhs rapidly started to seize the opportunities within the colonial State, especially in agriculture and

the army. British administration, in order to stabilize its rule, turned Punjab into the barracks of the Empire in the East. To keep Sikh recruits happy, it sought large scale agricultural development in Punjab, making Sikh peasantry probably the richest in Asia by the late 19th century.

A part of the imperial strategy was also to understand the core aspects of the Sikh community. As early as 1859, the government took upon themselves to translate the *Adi Granth* into English in order to understand its contents and probably find a key to what made the Sikhs tick in Punjab. This policy was consistently pursued throughout their rule in Punjab. Out of such mutual appreciation emerged a strong Sikh sense of being the first subjects of the State. So, for the Sikhs the colonial State was a dual blessing. In its political framework they could pursue their interests, and also occasionally they could alter its structure of control to their advantage.

Satish: Yes, quite remarkable: how skilful the British were in constructing a State in India and locating the strengths of different groups and using these to their own purposes. In sharp contrast to these stands our own inadequacy with regard to constructing large scale complex States which would be stable over long periods of time. Our various States in the medieval period — Rajput, Maratha, etc. — tended to be of small scale. The Mughal empire was large, but within a century of Akbar's death it began to fall apart. What would you say to that, Harjot, as an historian?

Harjot: The Sikh State was probably the 'shortest lived' imperial experiment within the Indian sub-continent. It lasted for less than half a century. Apart from this matter of time scale, the Sikh State was not much different from other small States in India. Ranjit Singh, the sovereign who happened to be Sikh, took his key ideas from the prevailing political arrangements. Unable to construct an elaborate bureaucratic structure, the State of Ranjit Singh passed into oblivion within a

decade of his death. Interestingly, a British observer, travelling in the Sikh dominions, commented in the early 19th century: 'Punjab is a land of 40,000 chiefs.' No surprise, then, that the dream of the Sikh State never took off; and it seems the phantom still haunts the popular Sikh consciousness.

Satish, you have been doing some work on the rise of bureaucratic States in Europe; and also in a recent article you indicated the relevance of such study for understanding the political crisis in contemporary India. Could you tell us why similar developments did not occur in the Indian sub-continent?

Satish: Yes, Harjot, we have a great deal to learn from Europe. For the last three or four years I have been reading about what happened in Europe during the medieval period. As you know, I am a sociologist and not an historian. So it was necessary for me to work hard to reduce my level of ignorance. And there are three things which I have found to be very striking.

One is that there are many ideas, if you like, models, which continue in Europe for a very long time, something like 2000 years. This is to say there is a live tradition which comes down from ancient Greece and Rome. It went into what happened in medieval Europe, and prepared the ground for the rise of capitalism there, and their later ability to expand into the Americas, India, Australia and so forth.

The second thing that struck me was that the Roman Catholic Church was extremely important in the shaping of modern Europe, especially until the end of the 13th century. This is a very large question, and we cannot go into much detail here.

But there is a third element which is astonishing. That is, the Roman Catholic Church was able to absorb a good deal of the Greek tradition. With it came the idea of reason, and the importance of reason in human affairs. This influence came in quite early; it went into the *New Testament*, which is the second part of the *Bible*. But also it was

because of this element that, in the 12th and the 13th century, the project of *reconciling reason with faith* became very important within the Church.

Harjot: Why could the Church play this kind of role in Europe while religious traditions in India have been largely constrictive?

Satish: Right. That is very important. First of all it has not been a uniform picture. There has been a great deal of bigotry within the Roman Catholic Church as we all know. But the Church was very important. The Roman State, which as you know was one of the greatest empires the world has known, collapsed completely in the 5th century when various hostile groups began to invade it.

To put a long story briefly, many of the Roman ideas for constructing a large State could go into the later medieval European States because earlier, men of the Roman ruling class had seen in the Church a last hope for their civilisation, and they took that institution over. There is a very interesting story about Pope Gregory, who was the Pope at the end of the 6th century; he is remembered as Grégoire the Great. At that time he saw almost the complete breakdown in political order all around him. But he did have relationships with Bishops of the Church all over western Europe. In the absence of any other government around him, he told his Bishops that they should act as rulers within their areas. What is important is that he gave them a very interesting rule. He said that you should make only such rules as *would apply also to the person who makes the rules*.

As you can see, this is absolutely fundamental in the latter construction of States where power would be used with a sense of discipline, power which is itself also subject to its own law. This is essential for constructing a sound bureaucracy which one can trust would function, as planned, honestly.

There are two other things that we need to notice about later medieval Europe, and both concern the

Church. When a new phase of State construction began about the 11th century, the Church was very much there. It had carried from Roman times the idea of legal codes, the idea of administering justice which would apply equally to everyone. It was slow to gain ground, and it has never been fully realised, but it was an important ideal. In the mid-12th century, there was a flourishing school of law already in Bologna in Northern Italy, and soon there were many more. Kings all over Europe found men trained in the technique of Roman law extremely useful in building States which could dispense justice to the population.

The second important thing is an early European capacity for judging the sources of threats facing the larger society and for trying to devise adequate responses to them. In mid-13th century, the Mongols were knocking at the doors of Europe in the East. And first the Pope and then the King of France sent emissaries to the court of the Great Khan of the Mongols to ascertain what kind of society they had, and what their intentions were towards the Muslims, the Christians, and so forth. I am struck by the difference between this attempt to try to judge threats far away, and our own history, for our ancestors made very little serious attempt in the 17th and 18th centuries to judge what the intentions of Europeans in India could be.

To answer your question, then, the Church in Europe was rather unusual: it carried the Jesus myth, of course; but it also carried the vision of a very large scale State, and a corresponding society, which it had inherited from the Roman State. It gave the church a political capability of its own which served Europe well between say 400 A.D. and 1300 A.D.

Harjot: Given the role of the Church in European State formation, do you think the Sikh religious institutions and authorities may also be able to provide a framework for the much publicised Khalistan? And speaking of that, are there also possibilities of a Hindu State, given the numerical dominance of this community within Indian society?

Satish: Sad to say, Harjot, I am not an astrologer, so I cannot really say with any certainty whether or not any of the dreams being projected today could come off. All one can try to do is to suggest a framework which should make it possible to judge at least the more reckless of these ideas. The construction of a State, a framework of government, for our huge country and population calls for disciplined, calm judgment. Words full of daring and bravado may turn out to be only adventurist nonsense.

I think we have to start with what there is now. This State is less than 40 years old. If we begin to redraw this political map, without strong, entrenched habits of making firm mutual commitments in politics and in other domains, my guess would be that we will quickly go back some two and a half centuries into the early 18th century. But even there you have a difference. At that time there were European powers, waiting in the wings, and keen to take over as colonial rulers. Now we have within the country enormous amounts of destructive capability. Unless we check ourselves, and consider our options very very coolly, my fear is that we could produce an enormous amount of collective devastation.

It seems to me rather that we need to learn to move towards recognising what the essential elements are for a society to function, to hold itself together, and to hold its own vis-a-vis other capable, ambitious peoples.

Harjot: Would you tell us then, **Satish**, what we need to do to live as sane men and sane women in a sane society?

Satish: Yes, Harjot, but there is not much that one can add to very simple ideas which are part of your tradition, my tradition and everyone's tradition, if only we care to read it right. We need human sympathy and love and attention to our human bonds.

We need also to learn that there are certain imperatives for a very large scale State such as ours. We need visions for the long run, for periods well beyond our particular

lives. Over that long haul, societies cannot long survive if the operative principles are revenge, teaching them a lesson, and hatred directed at groups defined as enemies. These flourish, rather, on capacities for recognizing disparate strengths and for drawing these to shared, collective purposes.

It is absolutely vital that there be general recognition also of the need for a fair deal for everyone. Over the past generation what we have seen is ruthless accumulation of wealth in a very small stratum, by every conceivable means, legal (not to say moral), illegal, or criminal; and there are these searing contrasts between the super-rich few and the super-poor millions. This mixture is explosive. Whom it blows up when will depend on chance elements. Whatever we may have had by way of conscience appears to have been killed by video games and five star hotels and the voice of the knife. Either we will rediscover how to construct a collective conscience or we will die a collective death.

There is also something else. I heard today that a man whose telephone went out of order phoned the telephone people and asked for its repair. The operator there wanted to know whether he was Hindu or Sikh. This kind of conduct is a prescription for disaster. India is an enormously segmented society. Today you can talk about Hindu versus Sikh, the next step will be Brahmin versus Rajput; and there are dozens of clans within Brahmins and Rajputs. We can either move towards that kind of fragmentation, which will quickly bring us all to our knees. Or we can move towards recognising one another as human beings, each unique in one's own way. We could seek ways of living so that fulfilment of one human being is enhanced by fulfilment of his neighbour. There is no conflict between the two, unless we choose to be narrow minded, choose not to look beyond the next hour. That way we will make this world hell for each other. That is not necessary; however; and we can go the other way, if we choose to do so. I can try also to help my neighbour grow — including the neighbour in distant Tripura.

Social organization of violence

MOHAMMAD TALIB

I

THE appalling events following Mrs. Gandhi's assassination defy analysis. One attempt to explain (or explain away to put it more aptly) the current episode of carnage, looting and burning, appeared to have followed the maxim: 'Give the dog a bad name and hang it.' To queries such as: who were the hysterical masses bereft of all humanity? To which section of society belonged the plunderers, reprobates, mass murderers, the answers invariably carried some reference to the *kangal* (pau-

per), *jhuggi-jhompri* *walas* (slum-dwellers), *sarak chhap* (street urchin), and above all the *lumpen proletariat* (folks without hearth or home) — held to be the leading instigators of violence.

The last term appeared repeatedly, so much so that in certain quarters people genuinely felt that the theory of proletariat was not enough; the need of the hour was to attempt a theory of the lumpen proletariat. One observes that the category of poor (of whatever type) has conventionally been handy to be included

or excluded any time in the political rhetoric, depending upon the mood and design of the ruling classes and their ideologies.

The role of lumpens in the recent happenings is not very difficult to substantiate. Experiences from the urban villages in Delhi and their trans-Yamuna neighbourhood (as reported in various national dailies in the first week of November, '84), are a case in point. Once again, probably long after Herbert Spencer's theory of society, did we see poverty and social aberration being put together in 'theory'. Poor men's smoky cabins were once again held to be the porticoes of moral pathology. The condition of poverty and deprivation came to be looked upon as the repository of maleficent powers, the unconscious and irretrievable force capable of unleashing blind violence.

One write-up after another in the popular dailies picked up the theme of the *dispossessed* to answer the jigsaw puzzle of the recent violence. One wonders if it was a class instinct or a systematic social research which has guided such an approach.

II

A few detailed case studies¹ of certain areas, however, reveal that the so-called poor were only one among the many executors of violence; the directors and the prompters were the not so poor who stood on the side lines. It is not difficult to understand that without an elaborate organization, it would have been impossible to manage a substantial amount of kerosine, petrol, acid, explosives, iron rods, vehicles and above all human labour and passion to ignite a viable project of violence; and, more importantly, to replicate it at the same time in areas which are remote from each other.

One is led to recognise that there existed an element of organization and differentiation in the entire episode of recent violence: *the planners did not kill, the killers did not plan.*

Such an observation burdens our understanding with a moral dilemma to decide whether execution of violence is more culpable than its formulation.² The moral dilemma, however, tends to get resolved from the position of the final enactment of violence, which would remain incomplete without either the formulation or the execution of it. The components of both the formulation and the execution are built into a common *division of labour* of the present mode of violence, though both get distanced from each other due to the mediation of highly efficient and formal bureaucratic structures.

More importantly, the present bureaucracy has a routine, unemotional proficiency about it, which not only makes the execution of violence more *visible* than its formulation but also *mystifies* the connection between the two. The mediation of bureaucracy also tends to depersonalize violence. This happens as one moves away from the victim in the particular scheme of the cumulative moves, ultimately leading to the final act of violence.

Such a quality of the bureaucratic structure comes handy to those in power, who employ it quite efficiently whenever expediency demands the face-lifting of the system. Or, let us say, when the guardians of power consider that enough violence has been committed, it becomes imperative upon them to identify and distinguish the witches from the saints, hunt out the former and absolve the latter. Conventionally, such a task is assigned to the institution of an enquiry commission.

One notices how the examination of violence carried the analysis to the custodians of power. Indeed, there is enough basis to argue that to examine violence is to examine the ruling elites and the implications of their exercise of power. It may, however, be pointed out that the identification of a given process as an exercise of power rather than as a case of structural determination, is

to assume that the exercisers of power could have acted differently, and were they unaware of the consequences of their action or inaction, that they could have ascertained these.

In other words, to locate power is at the same time to fix responsibility for consequences held to flow from the action or inaction from certain specifiable agents. This is not the place to examine the concept of responsibility. But it is worth noting that the concept being essentially a contested one, usually differs from its various formulations in having to decide upon the target of attack: the *men of power* or the *social organization* which heavily circumscribe their decisions.³

Violence, too, is not the same thing for everyone. It assumes different meanings from different positions; the custodians of the system and the victims' view of violence should understandably differ.⁴ For the custodians of the system, violence is a breakdown in law and order caused by certain local anti-social elements who are alleged to have committed a series of 'visible' crimes. One notes that such a view vests the responsibility of violence in the individual elements of society. Any conception of the social organization of violence and its perpetrators is clearly absent from the purview of the official notion of responsibility.

Once the component of the social organization stands deleted, power acquires an immense social space to go arbitrary. One observes that when the recent spate of violence was over, the fixing of responsibility (an exercise into restoring the system's credibility) became almost a gimmick. Convenient scapegoats to boost up the image of the system were readily hounded out. There were administrative reshufflings involving transfers, suspensions, serving of show cause notices and arrests under various penal codes.

3. For the discussion of power and responsibility, see Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, (London, the Macmillan Press, 1974) 55-56.

4. For different conceptions of violence, see Anthony Arblaster, *Op. Cit.* 242-243.

1. Refer to the painstaking though not impeccable reports by PUDDR and PUCL, *Who Are The Guilty?* (Delhi, 1984) also, Veena Das et al 'Only Widows and Orphans Left', *Indian Express*, November 16, 1984.

2. The present article draws its basic understanding of violence from Anthony Arblaster, 'What is Violence?' in Ralph Miliband and John Saville (eds), *The Socialist Register*, (London, the Merlin Press, 1975) 228.

Outside the official framework, the anti-social elements in the recent riots were declared to be a variety of the dispossessed populace in the urban villages and other areas in the city (here in Delhi) and its outskirts. The argument carries an apparent strength of its own, cogent enough to convince the *common sense*. Day-to-day common sense does not go beyond a certain tangible level of reality in order to be able to grasp how the human tragedy of such a ghastly nature was *organized* and *enacted* so *successfully*. If common sense (mostly reflected in the press and gossip) may be followed for the purpose of understanding its grasp and reach, one finds oneself pathetically captured within the framework of the formal/official structures of society.

From such a point of view, the story of the recent violence remains restricted to the dense details of 'visible' crimes of the anti-socials and the various omissions and commissions of the police, military and other 'responsible' officials and leaders relevant to a given area. Beyond this description other details begin to fade out as one comes close to the corridors of power. In the recent episode of violence, the higher of the higher-ups in the official bureaucracy being remotely situated from the actual situation, 'obviously' had no idea of *what* was happening in the city and when they did 'find out' they waited for orders from those in a still higher position in the power hierarchy to embark upon the necessary action. By that time the damage had been done.

With the fading out of details of the specific decisions/non-decisions in the higher echelon, the exercise of vesting responsibility also gets shifted to more *visible* and *lower* areas of society. This being completed, the leaders at the top of the pyramid, with their bland faces, smile into our televisions and other media, thereby further condemning the common sense to remain confined to the cramped quarters of the 'visible' reality. Their expression of serenity and confidence tells us that the guilty shall be severely punished, and the life and property of every citizen will be protected irrespective of his caste, creed or religion.

It may be noted that the discussion of power in relation to the notion of formulation of violence evokes a feeling of discomfort, inasmuch as the relationship seems to suggest that there exists an identifiable group of individuals consciously acting to affect others. To move away from such individualistic and intentional bias is to explain the exercise of power leading to violence in terms of an unconscious doing and/or non-doing.⁵

However, for our present purpose, it is no use arguing whether there exists an inter personal relation between the different moments of the exercise of power; or whether decision-making power is fragmented among groups which have little or no connection with one another. It is enough to hold that the existence of one or the other does not imply that the structure of events consequent to decision making is random or unpatterned and therefore liable to escape scientific or moral scrutiny.⁶

One observes that in the tracing of the organizer of violence from the immediate killer to the remote formulator, the common sense falters at a certain point of vacuum or silence of decision making in the State machinery (under whose tutelage crime of the worst kind was committed against innocent lives). Such a vacant point tends to escape the analytical grip of the social scientist if abstracted in terms of a necessary evil associated with the concentration of power, although most of the time it remains hidden in the background. Even if identified, such points are made politically innocuous as soon as they are put into categories such as 'inactions,' delays in action, 'silences,' 'paralysis of the system,' 'unmistakable omission,' 'communication gaps' etc.

With this observation in mind, let us try to conceptualise such areas

5. For this line of argument, see Steven Lukes, *Op. Cit.* 39.

6. See Goran Therborn, *What Does The Ruling Class Do When It Rules?* (London, NLP: 1980) 135.

in the functioning of the system as *zero points*.⁷ Such an exercise should not be sneered at as merely a part of finicky intellectualism. The theorising of *zero point* should, hopefully, sharpen our orientation towards a critique of society. It may safely be stated that the present Indian polity and its bureaucratic machinery specialises in institutionalising what is here termed as *zero points*. (Or, what goes without saying).

Zero point in bureaucratic organization would mean those rules and regulations on which nothing is inscribed but by which they are prescribed. It forms a structural space where unwritten rules and regulations are laid down by virtue of which power is allowed to go *ad-hoc* and arbitrary. *Zero point* is a transparency that underlies certain orders and diktats and which allows a situation to emerge and grow without having been ordered and dictated as such. *Zero point* should not be treated in a value-laden sense. It derives its value from the context in which it is situated. What it refers to is a certain level of organization which an event, an institution, or a social practice is capable of achieving. It may include violence, corruption, a religious ritual or a revolutionary praxis.

During the recent spate of killing and violence, the striking illustration of *zero point* was the forty-eight hour duration following Mrs. Gandhi's assassination. During the period, the government was completely dormant and the Capital witnessed a total paralysis of administration. There was an overwhelming absence of even the most basic understanding of events, initiative and co-ordination at all levels of State machinery. The most striking feature of the forty-eight hour period was the presence of complete 'inaction' at the higher level and maximum 'action' at the lower level,

7. This is the stylistic concept elaborated by Roland Barthes for his analysis of the transformations in literacy writing. It is defined as the neutralization and disappearance of symbols, the attenuation of pertinence (contrast) and the prevalence of associations of words and sentences. The concept is recontextualised to explain terrorism in Henri Lefebvre, *Everyday Life In The Modern World*, (London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press: 1971) 184.

both constituting essential components of an indivisible enterprise of violence, although in the eyes of the law, the former could escape without a single blot of guilt, and the latter if carried was completely disowned. The guilt, however, was squarely put upon those who executed the violence, later described as the lumpen proletariat and its variant forms.

The identification of *zero point* in the structure of official administration provides us with a strong basis to argue how violence did occur as a result of *inaction* or *delay in action*. Even a casual involvement into human affairs haunts us with events which are directly derived from the *zero points*. One finds thousands of undertrial prisoners languishing for decades in jails beyond their legally due period of detention. The gang warfare of the mafia in the mining regions has been allowed to go unrestrained causing havoc to the innocent lives of the mine workers. Hundreds of stone-quarry workers die of T.B. every year due to the conditions created as a result of the non-implementation of the labour Act. A misplacement of file, a code of certain gestures and glances among the police, politician and criminal is capable of permanently impairing the integrity of an honest individual.

IV

Having said so, let us briefly recall the manner in which we have arrived at the *zero point*. We embarked upon a fact finding expedition following meticulously the path that connected the visible actors of violence to the remote formulators who were hidden in the back of the back stage, till we reached a dead end which was heuristically termed *zero point*. This was the path one traversed in the domain of *post factum* where the victims of violence were treated as the victims of the violation of law and order, hence the ineluctable search for the guilty was made, alongwith the exercise of fixing responsibility.

But violence as an imposition of body injury (or its ultimate annihilation) upon human beings against their will, could be looked at as a reality which is too serious to be

simply wished away by the victim. The experience of violence is similar to an experience of a ghastly wound differing in details. Violence from such a position does not depend upon the law in being experienced as such. Whether the law recognises or not, the suffering due to body damage remains a suffering due to body damage, and death remains death.

If one concedes this observation, then an attempt could be made to overcome the *bias* of the practical/material framework of the existing system and its legal institutions in the understanding of violence.⁸ To begin with, let us tentatively put forth two propositions to be employed later in the discussion. First, violence shall be understood in terms of its consequences for the victim. In other words, violence is to be viewed from the vantage point of the experience of the victim rather than that of the custodians of the law. Secondly, violence shall be understood from the position of *zero point*, i.e., the position of inaction rather than that of action.⁹ It may be noted that action in the total scheme of violence is visibly proximate to the victim. The second proposition alters or even overturns our ordinary everyday understanding which regards action to be a natural prelude to violence and stops short at it.

The first proposition highlights those conditions of daily life whose consequences to the person who experiences them are similar to those of violence, though not as blatant and intense as carnage and bloodshed but enough to maim the pleasures and purposes of a human life. Such conditions refer to poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and disease. The second proposition when related to the first, reveals that the system does not have to resort to physical force to effectuate consequences similar to that of violence.

In a sense, the system, without direct or overt action (of the nature

of *zero point*), ensures the perpetuation of the above mentioned conditions. Here, it may be stated that violence as viewed in the domain of *post-factum* should be distinguished from the one in the *ante-factum*. The former takes violence for granted and later proceeds to search for the guilty ones; while the latter treats the social conditions leading to violence as one which are socially contrived and hence avoidable through human volition. The latter position upholds that any attempt to impute a quality of *naturalness*, *inevitability* or *determinism* to the phenomenon of violence is, for sure, an exercise in myth-making.

At this point it would be pertinent to sensitise our argument with illustrations from the social conditions which characterise everyday life and in their perniciousness resemble violence. For the majority of Indians there are multiple forms of violence, particularly specific to the condition of poverty. There is the violence of underpayment and over-work, especially when there is an acute shortage of employment amidst plenty of unemployed; one willy-nilly accepts work under *any* condition. There is the violence of unprotected unemployment and indigence where a person feels compelled to sell his personal ethic for a pittance. Violence in the situation of bonded labour is difficult to empathise. Under such circumstances, to raise a voice, for whatever just cause, is to suffer from an acute fear of further pauperization (strikes and agitation in the framework of restricted struggle means indebtedness and a fearful crisis in the worker's family).

And, worst of all, there is that slow and silent violence against the poor, causing grievous body damage unknown to the Indian penal code. This refers to the violence inflicted by malnutrition and exhaustion from physical work with the direst of physical consequences: a gradual withering away of the human body due to its rapid ageing. In other words, the body skips years to come close to death. Similarly, millions of people in India are afflicted with diseases directly related to malnutrition and non-availability of basic civic services and are hopelessly

8. Cf. Martin Shaw, *Marxism and Social Science: The Roots of Social Knowledge* (London, Pluto Press Ltd: 1975) 64.

9. See Anthony Arblaster, *Op. Cit.* 239-240.

abandoned to the devastating and debilitating diseases with little or no medical facility. As usual, such conditions take the greatest toll of the infants and the infirm.¹⁰

The depressing truth is: these are social conditions that *kill* human beings.¹¹ The word *kill* does not carry the metaphorical sense of killing the soul, but rather the most literal sense of physical dying and physical death. Needless to say, such conditions have a natural affinity with mental suffering.

If only for the reason of concreting one's argument and to have a palpable feel of the outcry, it is tempting to attempt and arrive at a *body count* of all the lives lost under the given conditions. With some mathematical calculus on the census data, it would be possible to calculate a reasonable estimate. For the present purpose, however, let us not succumb to the temptation of infinite regress to prove one's point. Suffice it to say that over, for example, a thirty year period (as between 1951 and 1981) there would be a toll of several lakhs of human beings who could be said to have died unnecessarily *prematurely* — both referring to that condition to mortality which could have been avoided if the social reality was different. Put simply: *lakhs of people have died because Indian society is what it is.*¹²

V

The discussion upto this point has shown us how violence of the social conditions leading to consequences similar to that of violence are both organized at the vortex of *zero point* whose final unfolding and enactment have usually taken place at the altar of poverty and deprivation, usually upon the shoulders of the poor, the so called lumpens. Systematic case studies of trans-Yamuna colonies in Delhi reveal, much to the dismay of the *hunting-*

out-the-poor thesis that the majority of the *slum-dwellers*, the denizens of its shanties, are not the 'feckless,' the 'beggarly,' and the 'lumpen.' Even a brief exposure into these re-settlement colonies would show that only a small percentage could be included in the category of *pauper* or the *street urchin*. The majority are engaged in the honest toil of earning one's bread through legitimate means.

In this regard, the observations from a case study of Sultanpuri (a colony on the outskirts of Delhi) are revealing. One learns that members of the active population are employed in various bodies as *safai karamcharis*. Some are *sikligars* (who specialise in preparing metal gratings for building construction), charpoy weavers, scooter rickshaw owners, television mechanics, electricians and shopkeepers. Some also work as scooter rickshaw drivers, rickshaw pullers, vendors and labourers.¹³

It is interesting to note that in certain areas where an accusing finger was pointed at the poverty stricken people, their self-respect retaliated. Thus reads a news item from Kanpur: '*We are thieves and dacoits, please do not come to our colony for demanding votes,*' says a banner displayed outside a colony, predominantly inhabited by harijans and poor people.

The provocation for the banner is that during the recent riots almost all major political parties blamed the inhabitants of the colony for the widespread looting and arson. The residents now feel so slighted that they have asked the candidates contesting for the Lok Sabha elections to keep out of their colony (*The Patriot* — dated 4th December, 1984). Under the pretext of searching for the loot, one can imagine what the policemen with their swagger sticks and larcenous tradition might have done to the poor residents. The reaction on the banner is full of irony as well as defiance.

It is certainly made evident that the qualifying criteria for becoming

a member in an organized act of violence was not the simple fact of being a poor worker or a lumpen. There were other categories of people which played more important roles in managing and administering it. The question worth probing would be: what formed the basis of the *organising principle* of violence? And, more pertinent to our present argument, how were some of the poor people mobilised to join the stage-managed violence? The answer to the given query requires more competence. But, for the present purpose, we will look for an answer by referring to an *operational* feature of our polity which unfolds into the vertical lineage of a patron client relationship, linking the most micro with the macro context, graduating in between into various levels of hierarchy. The vertical structure of power relations from top to bottom is maintained through terror, favour and administrative manipulation. Such an experience becomes blatantly obvious in a slum-dwelling or an under developed periphery of a city (supposedly a low visibility area of humanity).

The patrons, dealing primarily with public money, mobilize people through all sorts of economic ties and caste and communal links in order to win an election. The various categories of clients render their unconditional allegiance in the hope of getting some of their things done. The things refer to certain basic amenities below which life lapses into a subhuman condition, such as fair priced consumption goods, facility of drinking water, electricity, medicine, education, proper roads, drainage and numerous other facilities pertaining to the simple fact of living and earning one's bread. The provisions and amenities thus mentioned, are due to the people as a matter of right, but under the present conditions it requires a middle man to get them disbursed, though generally as a favour to be reciprocated later, in a manner desired by the patron. The forced reciprocation is usually rendered in the form of votes, money and servility.

The argument suggests that the welfare doled out by the State has been transformed, at least in part, into the material base on which the

10. Some of the parallels are drawn from Brazilian experiences in Peter L. Berger, *Pyramids of Sacrifice* (New York, Basic Books Inc: 1974) 145. Also see David Selbourne, *An Eye To India* (Middlesex, Penguin Books: 1977).

11. Refer to Peter L. Berger, *Op. Cit.* 146.

12. *Ibid.*

13. PUDR and PUCL's report, *Op. Cit.* 17.

present system of clientelism is built. Surely, the patrons do not give to one without taking from another. In the role as agents of the State and as the local level controller of its resources, the patrons act as watch guards, siphoning off the provisions of State welfare for their own or their allies' interest.¹⁴ Pertinent here would be an illustration from the slum-clearance experience and the creation of resettlement trans-Yamuna colonies in Delhi (during the period of Emergency). Each resettled resident was obliged to the ruling party for having received a plot of land to build a house. The residents further reproduced their loyalties in order to secure other necessities of a human settlement.

In the recent past, a standard mode of reciprocation has been that the residents of these areas have consistently shown an unthinking voting behaviour in the ruling party's favour. Also, they have readily provided substantial numerical support to the ruling party's rallies in the Capital's centre. There exists in such areas an established organizational network through which masses are mobilised for any demonstration of the ruling party's ostensible strength. A sarcastic political wit refers to these colonies as the mistresses (*rakhet*) of the ruling party.¹⁵ Hence, it is not difficult to understand how residents of these areas could be mobilised at short notice for any violent demonstration of power especially if this was what their patrons commanded them to do.

Also, one must not forget that the other forms of institutionalized violence, mentioned in the foregoing, dehumanise people to a point where they are able to indulge in carnage so casually. In short: what is political mobilisation from the patrons vantage point, is actually a depressing struggle for securing subsistence on the part of the client (however misconstrued it might turn out to be).

Before drawing to a close let us briefly recapitulate the distinctive signs and portents of the present understanding of violence. The main argument could be outlined in the following:

Violence is not contingency. It is a process. Far from being an unorganised madness it carries a built-in organisation of its own. Such an organization when mediated by a *zero point* tends to make the process of violence *visible* on the lower levels and *invisible* on the upper levels of a given social framework. The victim's perception of violence is brought out clearly from the position of *zero point* (i.e., the position of inaction). Such a position helps in highlighting those conditions which resemble violence in their consequences to the person who experiences it. At the same time, there are strong political expediencies and structures of social degeneration which force the final enactment of violence in the areas of poverty and underdevelopment. This regularity encourages the common sense to place exclusive blame on the poor and the socially disprivileged for their role in the act of violence. One learns that the forces of violence have assumed an organization which transcends a simple understanding of social order and structure. In comparison, the tradition representing the negation of violence is at present anaemic and only a fledgling. Happily or disturbingly, one notes that the tradition expresses itself in the restricted domain of *post-factum*. It reflects only after its adversaries have acted out their version of history.

The concept of *zero point* is a heuristic device to grasp the level of organization which the forces of violence have assumed in present society. If one concedes that violence is a product of an organized (however unconscious) human activity, then the dictum that logically follows is that a minimum of an equally organized human activity is alone capable of abolishing it. The rest is all argument and polemic devoid of the responsibility to inform and guide praxis.

14. For an elaboration of this line of argument, see Paul Littlewood, 'Patronage, Ideology and Reproduction,' *Critique of Anthropology*, 15 vol. 4 (1980) 41.

15. For other interesting observations see PUDR and PUCL's report, *Op. Cit.* 3.

Recognising the Change

K. K. SINGH

THE tragic assassination of a prime minister by her own body-guards followed by brutal attacks on a minority community, murder, arson and loot of the worst kind, with the covert support of political bosses, in India's premier capital city, is a commentary on the health of the Indian nation in the fourth decade of Independence. These events declare a deep rooted malady within the Indian society that threatens to undo the achievements of the past no less than the integrity of the nation itself.

One wonders whether the Indian nation will prosper or break up under the forces unleashed in the process of nation building. Some-

thing has certainly gone wrong. Few among those who had high hopes of building a prosperous and peace loving India at the time of Independence are happy with the contemporary situation or expect a marked improvement in the future.

I remember that special evening, August 15, 1947 in Lucknow, the day of our Independence and rejoicing. The public was happy that the British rulers had left and that a national government, blessed by the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, would steer the destiny of the country. There was enormous goodwill towards each other and high hopes in the capability of the leaders to give the Indian people a

place of pride in the international community.

Mahatma Gandhi's teachings had given us a sense of pride in our cultural heritage. They had also made us all acutely aware of the sufferings of the poor and the down-trodden. In new India, we wanted a place of equality for all, especially the under-privileged. We wanted a prosperous and self-sufficient India. And, even more, we wanted for all our citizens, regardless of differences in caste, creed, culture or regional identity, a home in which they could pursue life as self-respecting citizens. But, today, in 1984, the big question is whether post-Independent India has grown in the desired direction as promised by the leaders and hoped for by the people or is it set to lose its most precious asset: a distinctive philosophy and world view based on tolerance, compassion and self-containment.

We now rank in the first ten among the industrialised countries of the world. Famines no longer haunt us. Our food production has kept pace with domestic requirements. Many epidemic diseases have been brought under control. Road, rail and air transportation have made enormous progress. The poorest sections of society, the so-called scheduled castes and tribes, as well as the 'backward' communities and the regions in which they live have benefited from schemes specially made for them. Our quality of professional education, scientific research and skilled manpower is superior to many. Our neighbours could be envious of our political stability. Public institutions have generally kept pace with the times. The recurring challenges and crises before the nation have passed without threatening our geographical or cultural integrity.

As, against these achievements, big and small, are some serious failures. An important one is the inability to bind the Indian people as one nation. Clashes between peoples belonging to different regions and religious groups have become sharper and more brutal over the years. 'Competition for economic security has threatened the cultural identity and ethnic survival of the minorities. Methods

now adopted are quite contrary to the way Indian society has traditionally resolved conflicts. The earlier approach was to consult people and to harmonise conflicting interests. Solutions arrived at may not have been ideal but they were seen as just. In the contemporary situation there is a feeling that justice cannot be had without the use of physical force.

The frequent and unpredictable eruptions of violence, often at the instance of competing political interests, have rendered the government helpless in containing them. The minorities in India, in general, and the citizens, in particular, have become increasingly insecure. The spirit of accommodation and tolerance of which we were once proud is fast melting. Differences between people over economic, political and related matters have now taken the form of confrontations with the State. Assertion of rights and their fulfilment have become political issues and, as such, are outside the domain of justice and fair play. The validity of a cause, its ethical propriety, concept of co-sharing and collective responsibility have all been subordinated to considerations of political expediency and economic exploitation.

In the new idiom, one asserts a right or gains a point not because the cause is just but because one is strong and organised. The weak, the deprived and the unorganised are condemned to suffer humiliation and exploitation. Parties to a conflict can adopt any means to gain their ends since neither means nor goals are guided by principles of justice and fair play. And those who do not or cannot assert themselves must suffer degradation. Free India belongs to the rich, those entrenched in positions of power and their supporters.

The urban-rural, rich-poor and elite-masses divide emerges from the same sources that alienate the minorities, namely, unequal access to economic opportunities, continued hardships and utter helplessness in changing the current situation (powerlessness) for the better. The divide has bred two cultures in India. One is led by the mainstream urban-industrial elites who are becoming

increasingly powerful and insulated from the life and fortunes of most Indian people. The other consists of small land owners, the landless, artisans and daily bread earners most of whom live in villages and some in cities.

A sizeable number who want to enter the mainstream, but find it difficult, are the service and small business families. They stand between the two cultures, combining features of both. Industrialisation, modernisation, urbanisation or technological advancements aided by government have by and large helped the urban-industrial segment. The agriculture-rural sector remains deprived. There is, indeed, less stark poverty today than in the past but the utter deprivation, malnutrition and suffering that so many people undergo in the fourth decade after Independence does indicate that something has gone wrong with our economic planning and our political system.

While the government is quite aware of the dimension of poverty and has undertaken various programmes to help the poor, the impact, by and large, has been minimal. And the reasons are not difficult to comprehend. Grants, subsidies and bank credit cannot help poor people become economically self-sufficient or gain respectability. Genuine attempts have not been made to enable the vast majority of people to improve their income level.

The pricing policy influenced by the industrial-urban interests and implemented by the government, places the primary producer of goods and services at a disadvantage. Whether it is the per unit price of milk purchased by cooperatives or government under 'Operation Flood', hides sold by the poorest among the poor or that of the minor forest produce collected by the tribal, the margin of profit is quite small. Those who process goods or carry them to the retailer usually make a comfortable profit without taking the risks or putting in the hard work of the primary producer.

The question to ponder is whether a nation, Asian or African, which is

committed to the social and economic welfare of all people can ever succeed if it adopts economic policies that favour the urban-industrial sector. Our approach to economic development has not proved successful so far as the poor are concerned. Many have moved to the centres of power, accumulating enormous wealth, helped by a political system in which money is an important enabler and also a symbol of status and respectability. Most of those who cannot or do not make the entry are condemned to perpetual poverty. And this is a sizeable group, comprising nearly half the population. India's economic policies have helped industrialize the country. But they have also made poverty an enduring feature of Indian society.

India's political system was supposed to throw up the best among the citizens to the highest public offices. But in reality those elected are more concerned about furthering their own interests than that of the public. Hardly any one can hope to get elected to public office without the backing of big money. And once elected there is a compulsion to make money and to oblige one's supporters.

Thus, it is not ideological convictions, personal beliefs or qualities of character that determine whether one joins a political party or seeks election. It is money, influence and the right connections that count most of all. The political process has brought in its wake powerful forces that have led to corruption, and its acceptability, becoming a way of life. What was intended to be a vigorous process for the articulation of local interests at the national level has deteriorated into a system for the articulation of private and vested interests at all levels.

The combination of centralised planning, a virtually centralised political system and a centralised system of administration have cut at the very root of our traditional institutions and our concept of individual freedom. Earlier, under western influence, many felt apologetic about our traditional social institutions. But even after Independence we

continue to look westward. Little effort has been made to understand our heritage and use its strengths for nation building. We have tried to build a new society without using our own building materials.

The blind adoption of the western model of economic development and its value assumptions have played havoc with our social values and world view. As we continue to run away from our past, we run into confusion, playing games to fulfil personal ambitions in the name of public good, without any sense of social purpose or commitment. A society that once gave importance to social good over personal advantage, idealising sacrifice and cooperation over conflict, competition and greed, has lost its direction. Personal advantage is pursued unmindful of its social consequences.

Our leaders who once set an example of selfless conduct have now chosen either to retreat into their own private worlds or to play the game that will put them on to the path to success. The qualities of character that our society has traditionally valued are no longer valid in giving one status and respectability. Even the 'Gandhians' today are different from those of yester years. The older generation having retired or rendered ineffective, the younger pursues the same goal of success as others while fabricating the myth of service with scant regard for moral values.

There is, however, no dearth of individuals or groups who will work for the public good. But the motivation to work for the public good is conditioned by the realisation that one is insignificant in the cross-currents of big money and big power. The norms of public conduct or the concept of public responsibility that once guided action have become meaningless. Nothing illustrates this better than the responses to violence on Sikhs following the death of the Prime Minister at the hands of an assassin. While individual members of the majority community went out of their way to help those in distress, endangering their own security, there was hardly any public response on a large scale to assure the members of

the terrified community that they did not stand alone.

As a result, not only the Sikhs but other minority communities in India have learned, once for all, that they stand on their own to fend for themselves and that the law and order system cannot be depended upon to protect them. This state of being is the exact opposite of the clan that existed on August 15th, 1947. On that day there was a feeling that all communities are one and have a shared responsibility to build a prosperous land which would provide ample opportunity to all to live life the way they wanted.

Whatever has happened since Independence is by no means the outcome of evil design. The current configuration of forces unleashed by the centralised political and economic system has given birth to a reality over which the national leadership seems to have little control. People who have sacrificed and continue to do so without receiving a fair share in return are now restless. So are those whose rising expectations have not been fulfilled.

The signs are clear. In spite of the abundance of consumer goods and vigorous marketing strategies, there is a growing under-current of dissatisfaction among all. People are dissatisfied with themselves and with the situation they are placed in. It is baffling that the very people who run after the new symbols of status and power and succeed in achieving them are not quite satisfied with their achievements. In this state of being lies the potential for instability and violence.

The trends of the past are bound to continue in the future. The existing economic and political system in which some people have a powerful vested interest cannot be wished away. The only hope is in a counter-movement which would get underway and bring the present state of moral and spiritual decay to a halt. This would, should it come, be a painful confrontation between opposing forces. Many lives could be lost. But if India has to preserve the gains since Independence and also to make corrections for its future, sacrifice on a scale matching the malady is unavoidable.

Non-governance

BHARAT KARNAD

INDIA has a reputation to live up to, so, as if on cue, the country slid into its native atavisms. Indira was shot and Sikhs were sacked. And the question once again arises — where was the government? It was doing what it does best — taking a bad situation and making it worse, which at least proves that Indian governance is not all pretence.

It is sometimes easy to miss the obvious. Like for instance the fact that India is among the 'best governed' countries. Come again? OK. A worthy of yore (Jefferson?) said something about a government being best which governs least. So, what is a government that goes through the motions of governing without, miraculously, doing so? Why, a superior government, of course!

One look at the vast and expanding ruling apparatus, staffed by proliferating herds of civil servants, is enough to prompt hosannas for the system, which provides job opportunities for the multitude even as it frees the rest of us to circumvent the government and make personal gains. Individual successes have a way of adding up to collective good!

The Indian government structure sends many observers gushing about the elaborateness of it all, others, high on the continuity of governmental process, to wax congratulatory about the apparently smooth transition by the country from the *ere coloniale* into self-rule, and still others to contemplate the deluge of happy statistics pouring out of Government of India offices and to confirm the idea we have of ourselves as a great and good nation on the march. If on occasion we appear to be doing a fair imitation of Thackeray's frog blowing itself to ox-size, it is one of those gauntlets a country on the make must run.

Which is to say that governing India seems to be a snap. It is

another matter that on the ground, as they say, the reality is much different, if no less sanguine. When dealing with government we all routinely find ourselves in the position of S. J. Perelman who experienced, he said, the lingering passage of days, weeks, months, years, and eons, of the rise and fall of dynasties, in the time it took him to complete visa formalities in Bombay. But westerners, as we know, are notoriously fickle, short of humour as well as patience. They entertain the heretical notion that government is there for people's convenience, not to show them who is boss.

If sluggishness is the hallmark of our system, those who make it 'work' resemble the man in the cockpit of a giant and complex airliner, who is unaware that his control of the aircraft is severed through malfunction and that the bird is flying on auto-pilot. (The servo-mechanism being the momentum and inertia of nearly forty years of muddling through.) Thus, while our *netas* and *babus* think they are steering the ship of State by the seat of their pants, the people know instinctively that the country is loonily out of control and flying by defective wire.

Verily like the pilot who cannot make sense of but is reconciled to the erratic behaviour of the plane just so long as it does not plunge to the ground, our politicians and their bureaucratic minions act convinced that the country's careening from one crisis to another more dangerous one is normal for the course so long as each eruption does not close in India's end. Their complacency seems to keep pace with the rising danger-quotient of each succeeding crisis. A way to compensate, perhaps.

It has led to a gridlock of massive incompatibilities and contradictions. The government makes policies that the machinery of State and a deteriorating civil service geared for the simpler colonial administrative func-

tions cannot realise. Leaders espouse a State ideology (socialism) they half-believe in and, worse, only half-understand, and which is at odds with the people's genius. And, lacking a leader with the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru who, by the force of his personality and actions, persuaded the people that day is night, that a symbolic gesture is tantamount to reaching the objective, the political enterprise of State-building is bereft of commitment and credibility. The result is the growing irrelevance of government.

This, in turn, has made Indian democracy, which started out with such initial promise, something of a bad joke, characterised by the usual third world politics of corruption and mis-rule but clothed in (synthetic) *khadi*. It has forced the authorities on the defensive and into the business of potemkinising national life and producing development on paper.

The system could conceivably be in better trim if its managers were agreed on what it is they are supposed to be doing. For instance, if there was a consensus on the role as bosses, as moghuls and *yazirs*, and if the goal was to keep the unwashed masses in their place, the people would have to perforce be accommodating.

If as has happened, it is repeatedly dinned into them that they are partners in progress and part of the great democratic experiment, that the government is theirs to vote in, vote out, that persons in official posts are less civilian masters than civil servants, the people may be forgiven if they begin to take the message seriously and assert themselves in ways not entirely predictable. After all, participatory democracy's heady stuff and the citizenry, new to the game, may not be able to deliver on the necessary good manners and politesse demanded by the Westminster-style system transplanted from the banks of the Thames to that of the Jamuna.

A tropicalised Westminster model is one of the peculiarities of the Indian scene and stands alongside other more intrusive ones. Like a raggedy country with one foot in the space age and the other in the

medieval era, high-technology competence coexisting with low-technology ineptitude, brides set afire for bringing in inadequate dowries juxtaposed against a woman Prime Minister who ruled for 17 years, atomic scientists consulting horoscopes; communal passions in service of vote banks, sectarian conflict inflamed by secular snake-oil, in short, a whole bunch of irreconcilables living fist by jowl in a steamy subcontinental hot-house.

Still, at the root of the governmental malaise is the confusion about its mission, a confusion worse confounded by the Congress Party qua State ideology which, to paraphrase Gladstone, is opposed to capitalism but supportive of capital (and capitalists).

Other countries have evolved their systems after much trial and error, after long soul-searching and dialogue. The hard edges in the British and American democracies, for example, were smoothened out over a couple of hundred years of exposing the people to the joys and responsibilities of representative government. Hence, the generally centrist and moderate hue of politics in these two countries — our constitutional role models.

'Socialist India', on the other hand, sprang full blown from the mind of one man — Nehru. It had no connections in the native soil or ethos. It was an alien thing grafted on to the Indian body politic, a graft which stuck because of the good doctor Nehru, but which mutated into a variant that was not effective in the way the Stalinist variety was, in propelling the Soviet Union to the front ranks, because it erred on the side of muddle-headed do-gooding elitist socialism represented by the Fabians.

This brings up the legitimate question of whether or not Nehru used 'Socialism' as a cover for the elite politics he was comfortable with. He was a true democrat all right, all the time keeping a check on his autocratic tendencies — the kind of self-control not many in power wield. But he also defined his personal task in terms of *noblesse oblige* and himself as the engine of change. In this he reflected the thinking of Pobedo-

nostev, tutor to the last two Romanovs, who said that 'The history of mankind bears witness that the most necessary and fruitful reforms — the most durable measures — emanated from the supreme will of statesmen, or from a minority enlightened by lofty ideas and deep knowledge.' His attraction to Soviet socialism can in part be explained by the fact that it afforded Nehru the working example of a reformist government run by the enlightened few.

'Socialist India' therefore is no more than a construct, as Talleyrand said of the French Revolution, of 'builders of theories for an imaginary world.' And just as inevitably as the French Revolution was marred by Jacobin excesses, the Nehruvian scheme spawned the take-over of the system by leftist parvenus who have pushed India into the predicament it is now in — poised to fall between several stools.

This is not to equate the likes of Robespierre with the trendy Kumar-amangalams. But it is to point out the costs of allowing opportunists, with the unerring knack for hitting the hammer squarely on the thumb, to fashion a socialist or any other State. Look what they did to the perfectly sound insurance and banking industry. They went ahead and nationalised it, in the process jeopardising people's savings by turning them over to bumbling bureaucrats who cannot be held accountable for playing fast and loose with company assets.

When the government has permitted market forces to be the arbiter, the results have been little short of spectacular. Far from the famine predicted by the Carnegie Foundation study ten years ago, the country is today self-sufficient in food, primarily because the pricing and other controls were removed and the profit incentive reintroduced. But such lessons are inconsistent with the socialist credo and Congress Party dogmatics, and are never fully learned.

Statist solutions for socio-economic problems are pursued because of their seductive simplicity. Look at what Stalin accomplished. You want the *kulaks* out? Wham, collectivize the land. You want the indus-

trial productivity to treble or quadruple? Easy, see to it that workers spend extra hours on the factory floor, in return for the greater glory of the Fatherland. You want higher savings, ensure that there is nothing the people can spend their money on. You want guns at the expense of bread and butter. Simple, let the people *eat* cabbage soup. The simplicity undoubtedly impressed Nehru in a hurry to 'modernise' India.

But even the Soviet State took a long time coming. The revolution did not just happen one cold October day in 1917. It can be argued that the system Lenin and his band of Bolsheviks introduced in the previously Czarist domain was close to what Tolstoy among others were advocating for some time as an ideal system for Russia — centralised rule without the waywardness, whimsy, and the deadly arbitrariness of the reign of the Romanovs. Tolstoy had always maintained that the method of governance has to mesh with the people's nature to be a hit, a qualifier Nehru disregarded, perhaps a little too wantonly, in shaping the 'socialist destiny' of India.

The main reason socialism so misfits in the Indian scene is because no society is more divided (or pluralistic, as the euphemism goes) or more individualistic or more anarchic. This means that, to achieve even a modicum of order, harsh measures are required. To expect, as Nehru did, that a centrally planned and directed economy would alone suffice to establish socialism in the Indian milieu and without resort to Stalinist innovations like gulags, pogroms and purges, shows the extent of the unreality attending the enterprise.

The fact, of course, is that insofar as Nehru ruled out ruthless and oppressive rule, his socialism soon became a mix of sentiment, symbols and gestures, a handy rhetorical counterpoint to the backwardness of a traditional society he hoped to change.

However, socialism if only as rhetoric, has a dark side to it. It may win votes as Mrs Gandhi repeatedly showed, but it raises expectations which cannot be met and sharpens animus along the

fissure lines of caste, creed, community, sect, religion and region which renders peaceful resolution of conflict impossible. Hello, politics of assassination and turmoil. It also sparks, what Plato called, the basic revolt of the underprivileged in a setting where 'extreme love of acquisition' is matched by 'unequal accumulation' of wealth.

It is hardly possible to visualise a socialist society without a huge bureaucratic apparatus that manages the productive and distributive process' said Joseph Schumpeter in an epilogue to *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*. 'Therefore we may equate the march into socialism to a conquest of private industry and trade by the State' he added.

How reluctant a socialist Nehru was when it came to the operative principles may be gauged from the fact that he neither led any such march to conquer the private sector, nor looked upon the powerful bureaucracy he inherited with anything but distaste. Indeed, he despised the ICS as a lackey service, going so far as to write that 'no new order can be built up in India so long as the spirit of the ICS pervades our administration and our public services. That spirit of authoritarianism is the ally of imperialism and it cannot coexist with freedom ... Only with one type of State it is likely to fit in and that is the fascist type.'

So, what does Nehru do? He lets the ICS continue in the guise of the IAS and other services. Those responsible for the well being of the empire, meaning English law and order, have their mission changed overnight. They are now charged with nursemaiding development — a trickier and more onerous job, one it was unprepared for and some 37 years later is still unable to handle.

The reason for the prospective failure of an administration with a simple law and order mindset was also supplied by Nehru who dismissed the civil servants 'as an expensive luxury and kept classes, who live in a circumscribed world of their own — an Anglo-India surrounded by sycophants and unaware

of the dynamics of the Indian social scene.' While the brown sahib-ness may have receded a bit since then, the sense of exclusiveness remains, which is ironic considering the precipitous fall in standards, tracked by the Administrative Reforms Commission from the mid-'60s, in the quality of those entering service.

A Gresham's Law is at work here. The bad drives out the good not only in the central and provincial services but among the politician's ranks too. Thus the irreversible trend is for the bright college graduates to have engineering and management degrees and enter the burgeoning private sector. The less accomplished lot seek the relative safety of government service, and the intellectual Neanderthals and *dadas* on campus gain entry into parties as budding leaders. Between this kind of *neta* and an inferior sort of *babu*, the country gets shafted.

A political system, however catholic, reaches a point when incompatibilities piled upon contradictions results in the immobility of government which, spurred on by the politician's grab for ever more power and the bureaucrat's greed for the crumbs from the politician's table, has greater reach and clout than ever before.

The crypto-socialists in South Block don't understand what the British so clearly did that because, as the Simon Commission Report declared, 'Of no country can it be said more truly than of India that government is administration', it is imperative not to tax or stretch the abilities of the administrative set-up by giving it too much and too diverse a responsibility. To do that, as the India Office in London knew, was to risk reducing government to a paper exercise.

Now that the nightmarish denouement is upon us, we can sit back and enjoy it, certain in the belief that like all bad dreams, this too will pass. The less optimistic can ponder the approaching darkness at (Indian) noon and the classical lament: 'Quantula sapientia mundus regitur' (How ignorantly are we ruled).

The poverty problem

K. SUNDARAM and
SURESH D TENDULKAR

I

THE problem of poverty has been placed at the core of the development process since the early 1970s not only in India but in all the underdeveloped countries. The earlier development doctrine emphasized the problem of poverty of the nation as a whole without explicitly distinguishing the differences in the levels of living enjoyed by different sections of the population. In contrast, the new development doctrine of the 1970s shifted the focus of the development problem from the poverty of the *nation* as a whole to the poverty of a large *section* of the population in a nation and argued for the adoption of a strategy of direct attack on poverty rather than relying on the percolation of undifferentiated economic growth to eradicate poverty.

In the Indian context, the articulation of the new development doctrine can be traced back to the early

1960s and it has been incorporated in the fifth and the sixth plans in the form of a strategy of combining growth with redistribution.¹ The present paper is prompted by the efforts which have been made in recent times to obfuscate the problem of poverty in the face of an inability to accept the political consequences of the commitment to the *Garibi Hatao* slogan.

These efforts consist of recourse to new artifacts such as PQLI* and the talk of so-called new dimensions of poverty such as educational poverty, health poverty, etc. These efforts require to be firmly resisted because the problem very much remains with us, is serious and has a staggering magnitude. It is also important to recognise that there exist

*Physical Quality Life Index.

1. For a detailed discussion, see Suresh D. Tendulkar: 'Economic Inequality in an Indian Perspective' in A. Beteille (ed): *Equality and Inequality, Theory and Practice*. Oxford University Press, Delhi (1983) pp 71-127, esp. sections 9 and 10.

no easy and soft solutions to the problem and that economic solutions basically pose political questions which need to be tackled through the political processes.

II

In India, poverty has been viewed as a state of absolute deprivation defined operationally in terms of a certain *normative* minimum level of per capita household consumer expenditure called the poverty line. There exists an unavoidable and inherent element of arbitrariness in the specification of the poverty line. For practical purposes, the poverty line should be regarded as a 'low enough' but still a 'reasonable' normative minimum level of living. The essence of the concept is that it is measurable at the household level and that it divides the population into two groups: those who are deprived and hence poor and those who are not and hence non-poor.

The proportion of the poor to the total population gives the widely used headcount measure of poverty, sometimes also called the incidence of poverty. Despite an element of arbitrariness in specifying the poverty line, the movement of the headcount ratio over time reflects the extent to which the market-based growth process, as modified by the government intervention in economic activity and its regulatory policies, affects, the deprived or the poor section of the population.

The poverty measure has to be clearly distinguished from the physical quality of life index (PQLI for short) proposed by Morris D. Morris and claimed to measure 'the condition of the poor'. It is an unweighted average of three indices: the literacy rate, the infant mortality rate and the expectation of life at the age of one. Notice that all these indicators of the physical quality of life are measured at the *aggregate* level without reference to the differences in the quality of life enjoyed by different sections of the population in general and the poor and the non-poor sections in particular.

the infant mortality among the poor section of the population. Moreover, while the literacy rate can, at least in principle, be measured at the household level, life expectancy at the age of one year can, given the data system, be measured only at the aggregate level.

It is possible, however, to think of two conditions under which PQLI can serve as a good approximation to the physical quality of life experienced by the poor households. If the poor in a given population account for an overwhelming proportion, say 80 or 90 per cent, then, changes in PQLI or its component indicators, even though formally relating to the whole population, would indeed adequately measure the variations in the conditions of the poor. Alternatively, even if the set of the non-poor is sizeable, if all of them have already achieved the maximum attainable levels in respect of all of its component indicators, then variations in PQLI would still measure the variations in the condition of the poor. But neither condition is plausible in the Indian case.

Thus, the latest available survey for 1977-78 indicates that the non-poor account for three fifths of the total population. Secondly, whether in terms of infant mortality, or in terms of expectation of life at age one, or literacy, it is recognised that there is still a considerable distance to be travelled even by the non-poor before they attain the highest levels of the component indicators.

Under these circumstances, improvements in PQLI, especially when they are modest as they have been in India, might well reflect largely the gains to the non-poor, with the poor gaining marginally, if at all. Consequently, PQLI does *not* constitute a substitute for the deprivation-based poverty measure and hence cannot be regarded as a performance indicator for efforts towards poverty alleviation. It is very important to emphasize this point precisely because PQLI is claimed to measure 'the conditions of the poor'.

Efforts have also been made to establish the alleged 'Poverty of poverty analysis' by Dr. A.M. Khusro, Member, Planning Com-

mission.² He proposes a distinction between what he calls 'food poverty' and what he calls health poverty, educational poverty and poverty in respect of the consumption of industrial goods. He uses the movement over time of *aggregate* national level indicators such as food consumption per capita, literacy rate, educational enrolment ratios, health services and consumption of industrial goods to assert that although food poverty has been slow to eradicate there has been significant progress in reducing what he calls educational poverty, health poverty and poverty in terms of the consumption of industrial goods. This progress, according to him, has not been noticed by the earlier analysts of poverty because they concentrated only on what he calls 'food poverty'. With this claim, he seeks to demonstrate the so-called 'Poverty of poverty analysis'.

The first point that needs to be made is that the normatively specified poverty line refers to the *total* household consumer expenditure per capita. It thus relates to not just the expenditure on food but also the expenditure on non-food goods and services *including industrial goods*. Thus, the analysis of poverty incidence in terms of the poverty line does not relate only to 'food poverty' but also poverty in terms of an inability to spend on non-food items at even the modest levels associated with the *total* household consumer expenditure per capita defining the poverty line.

As regards indicators such as literacy rates or health services, the point we made earlier in the context of PQLI holds here as well: small improvements ending up with performance levels far short of the maximum are fully consistent with the poor—defined obviously by reference to a criterion other than that embodied in the indicator itself—benefiting only marginally, if at all.

Further, several important questions arise if the expansion in health

2. The full text of Dr. Khusro's Silver Jubilee Lecture at the Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi on September 25, 1984 is not available. The following discussion is based on the official summary of his lecture available in the files of the Institute of Economic Growth.

It is possible, for example, that the overall infant mortality rate may go down without necessarily reducing

and educational services are to be viewed as alternative indicators of poverty and even more so if one's judgment about the performance of the economy in terms of the normatively defined poverty line are to be revised on this basis. Insofar as many of these aggregate indicators relate to the provision for or availability of certain facilities — be it in education or health — the question of the ability of the poor to avail of these facilities is important.

Whether these services are in fact reaching the poor, if and when needed, requires ascertaining the validity of one or more of the following propositions. First, the facility under consideration is available in abundance and its price is so low that, given the existing distribution of purchasing power, it can be afforded by even the poor households. Second, the facility under consideration is scarce, but the working of the non-governmental institutions disbursing it is biased *in favour of* the poor. Third, the facility under consideration is scarce but it is being delivered efficiently and directly to the poor households by the government.

Khusro does not adduce any evidence to establish the validity of these propositions across the board in India. It is conceivable, however, that curative medical facilities of consultation and prescription may have been saturated in certain urban metropolises. But this is not so even in urban metropolises with respect to other medical facilities such as hospital beds. Since these propositions do not hold for the vast rural hinterland, inferences about the state of well-being of the poor from aggregate performance indicators of the kind Khusro offers are dangerously misleading.

Moreover, such inferences, unsupported by systematic marshalling of evidence on what is happening to the poor *per se*, form too fragile a basis for reversing one's judgment based on the statistical trends in the incidence of poverty in India. At any rate, to describe such unsubstantiated assertions as a 'proof' of the 'poverty of poverty analysis' is a triumph of enthusiasm over reason.

Lest we be misunderstood, it should be made clear that the growth of literacy, reduction in infant mortality and reduction in morbidity and mortality in general are indeed elements of both individual and social well-being. As such, these are legitimate and important concerns of development policy, and progress in these spheres needs to be monitored. In an analysis of poverty one can view these as *additional dimensions provided the evidence relates directly to the consumption by the poor* of these elements of social consumption. The point is that not only has no evidence of this kind been presented, but, more importantly, given the present data system, as yet, *it is not possible* to present such evidence, even for a one time-point not to speak of time-trends. Also, some of these indicators are not even meaningfully defined for an individual and at best can be measured for the poor and the non-poor broadly defined.

More importantly, given the relative insignificance, both currently and even potentially, of these elements of social consumption in the total (private plus social) consumption basket of individuals, *these cannot substitute* for an indicator which directly reflects the ability of an individual, in terms of private purchasing power, to buy food, clothing and shelter at certain minimum levels. This, combined with the availability of a fairly sound statistical basis for estimating the poverty-line-based incidence of poverty over the last 25 years or so, renders such an analysis not only legitimate but also important.

III

There has been an element of consensus among private researchers on the use of the following poverty lines: total household consumer expenditure per capita of Rs. 15 (rural) and Rs. 20 (urban) both at 1960-61 prices. These are adjusted to prices in other years using the Consumer Prices Index for Agricultural Labourers (rural) and the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (urban). The price-adjusted poverty line is applied to the size distribution of per capita household

consumer expenditure available from the National Sample Survey round for the same year in order to estimate the incidence of poverty defined as the percentage of the population below the poverty line.³

Descriptively, the incidence of poverty for the rural population declined from 54 per cent in 1956-57 to about 39 per cent in 1961-62. Then it gradually increased to attain the maximum level of 56.5 per cent in 1966-67 and 1967-68 — a level only slightly higher than in 1956-57. Thereafter, it hovered around 46 per cent between 1970-71 and 1973-74 and declined to 40 per cent in 1977-78, the latest year for which survey data are available.

Evidence regarding the incidence of urban poverty is not available before 1960-61. The incidence of urban poverty rose from about 40 per cent in 1960-61 to a peak level of 47 per cent in 1967-68. Thereafter, with fluctuations, it declined to 40 per cent in 1977-78.

It should be obvious that given the fluctuations in the incidence of poverty, it is equally easy to show a decline, a rise, or a constancy in the incidence of poverty simply by a suitable choice of points of comparison. It is for this reason that one must consider a statistical trend analysis which uses *all* the available observations. Such an analysis indicates the following conclusions.

Over the period from 1956-57 to 1977-78, there was no statistically significant time trend in the incidence of poverty in rural India. What we observe instead are fluctuations in the proportion of the population below the poverty line with a tendency for it to rise (fall) in years of bad harvests (bumper harvests). The same absence of a statistically significant trend emerges with reference to the incidence of urban poverty over the period from 1960-61 to 1977-78.

3. We may note that the poverty line of Rs. 15 (rural) and Rs. 20 (urban) at 1960-61 prices translates into Rs. 48.45 (rural) and Rs. 65.10 (urban) at 1977-78 prices. As against this, the poverty lines for the same year used by the Planning Commission are higher at Rs. 65 (rural) and Rs. 75 (urban).

Turning to the absolute number of the poor, a statistical trend analysis indicates that over the period from 1956-57 to 1977-78, on an average, 3.62 million persons were annually added to the population of the rural poor. The trend value of annual additions to the population of the urban poor over a slightly shorter period from 1960-61 to 1977-78 was 1.45 millions.⁴ The trend growth rates per annum of the size of the poverty population over the corresponding periods were 1.95 per cent (rural) and 3.39 per cent (urban).

It is important to recognise that the problem of poverty in India is *not* a marginal problem. It affected 40 per cent of the population even in an agriculturally bumper year of 1977-78. This meant that there existed over 200 million rural poor and nearly 60 million urban poor in 1977-78.

IV

A question has often been raised as to how far the incidence of poverty has been persistent in the sense that it affects the same set of households over a long period, and how far it has been transient in the sense that the identity of poor households keeps changing over time even though the incidence may remain unchanged. Unfortunately, no empirical evidence is available in this connection. The question, however, is indeed important, because the policies for tackling persistent poverty will have to be different from those for tackling temporary or transient poverty. Simple income transfers would take care of the problem of temporary poverty with the presumption that the overall growth process would provide permanent means of livelihood to the transient poor households.

This straightforward solution would not, however, suffice for the persistently poor households because one-shot income transfers would improve their levels of living only

temporarily. The persistence of their poverty status is itself evidence that they have been left out of the general economic growth process due to what we may call economic non-viability. Economic non-viability means that, given the market forces, labour and other resources (such as land) at the disposal of the persistently poor household do not earn enough income to enable the household to maintain an above-poverty level of living.

It is important to discuss at this point the following question: what are the forces governing the persistent or transient nature of poverty? In this connection, it is recognised that a very rapid rate of overall economic growth — say, something like 8 to 10 per cent per annum of GDP — generates a fair amount of what is known as 'income-mobility', i.e., shifts of individuals across the income scale due to the availability of increasingly better economic opportunities.

Such shifts are known to be relatively the more pronounced the higher the rate of growth and the greater the extent of integration of different sections of the society in economic activity. Unbiased working of the economic and social institutions is also absolutely essential for such shifts to embrace all sections of the population. Rapid growth of GDP in the presence of income mobility may be expected not only to reduce the incidence of absolute poverty and eventually eradicate it but also impart a transient character to whatever poverty that may exist during the growth process.

In India, the role played by such factors has been limited for a number of reasons. To begin with, there has been absence of rural-urban continuum in the population densities. In other words, more than three-fourths of the rural population is located in villages having a population size of 1000 or less. At the other extreme, an overwhelming percentage of the urban population is located in the very large million-plus cities. This factor would clearly bring about a segmentation of population densities across a spatial dimension.

Similarly, there has also been social segmentation in various degrees along caste and religious dimensions. In the economic sphere, we have what is usually called a 'dual' structure. This is reflected in an overwhelming percentage of the work force being employed in a large number of small, geographically dispersed, unorganised units having very low productivity and a very high share of output being concentrated in a small number of large, organised units with very high productivity. The persistence of the foregoing features has restricted economic mobility and hence led to inadequate integration of different sections of the population in economic activity.

When we combine these features with a low rate of economic growth — 3.5 per cent per annum — and social and economic institutions dominated by the existing socio-economic power structure, it is obvious that especially lower-end poverty embracing the bottom four-fifth of the poor population could not but have been self-perpetuating and persistent. It should also be obvious that a large number of the chronically poor may be located not in the fast growing regions of Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh and so on but in the slow growing regions in the country. As regards the top one-fifth of the poverty population near the boundary of the poverty line, it is possible that their fortunes may be governed directly by the fluctuations in the rate of growth from year to year and hence their poverty may be transient in character.

V

Given the magnitude of the problem of persistent poverty and given the continuation of the long-term growth rate of 1.5 per cent per annum (experienced over the last 35 years) in per capita income, it is widely recognised that passive reliance on the downward percolation of economic growth to eradicate poverty would take an inordinately long time, even if we were to make the favourable assumption that the benefits of growth are shared proportionately equally by all sections of the population. In fact, the

4. The trend value of average annual additions to the population of the rural poor over the period from 1960-61 to 1977-78 was 4.35 million and their trend growth rate was 2.43 per cent per annum.

growth process may bypass the poor households.

This is especially so in a situation where most of the poor households are virtually assetless and the economy is characterised by an abundance of labour relative to capital as well as land. Consequently, conventional growth orientation has to be combined with a conscious redistributive strategy for reducing the incidence of poverty. Some elementary but fundamental implications of the redistributive strategy require to be emphasized at this point.

Redistribution, by its very nature, involves reallocation of the same cake away from the better-off sections and towards those at the lower end of the income scale involving the losers as well as the gainers. It thus involves voluntary or forced sacrifices on the part of the existing economically dominant sections of the society in order to benefit the economically weaker sections. This requires that the better-off sections give up some part of the benefits of the growth process which they would be able to command in the normal market-based growth process. Generally, these sacrifices are likely to be all the more unpalatable if carried out at a lower level of per capita income than at a higher level. Moreover, the extent of sacrifices is expected to be the larger, the greater the incidence of poverty and the shorter the period over which it is sought to be eradicated.

Looking at the lower-end of the income-scale, redistribution under conditions of persistent poverty has to be conceived not in terms of one-shot transfers but in terms of raising the economic viability of the poor households. This requires a reorganisation of the production and distribution processes to generate a lasting earning potential among the poor households which would enable them to maintain an above-poverty level of living. The extent of reorganisation may be expected to be all the more substantive, the greater the incidence of poverty.

These two sides of the redistributive strategy underline the fact that any serious implementation of such a policy is bound to generate potential social conflict situations on

a scale much higher than what is implied in a conventional growth-oriented strategy. How such conflicts can be anticipated, contained and resolved in a non-violent fashion and within the established democratic political processes poses the most challenging task for all the political parties which firmly believe in a democratic framework and are committed to the eradication of poverty.

Genuine and active political sanction and support as well as the mobilisation of social and political forces become extremely crucial for the success of the redistributive growth strategy. This brings out very clearly how the redistributive economic solutions are basically political questions, answers to which need to be found at the political level and through the established political processes.

The feasibility of redistributive efforts is itself governed by two basic considerations. To start with, a democratic political environment dictates a gradualist, consensus-based and noncoercive path in pursuing the social objectives of growth as well as redistribution for reducing poverty. Secondly, the low level of overall per capita income and its underlying cause — namely, the low level of capital stock per worker resulting in a very low labour productivity — underline a compulsive need for stepping up capital accumulation in order to raise the level as well as the rate of growth of labour productivity and, hence, per capita income.

The progressively rising productivity, in turn, would provide a necessary though not a sufficient where-withal, both for stepping up the rate of capital formation and for carrying out redistribution. This is especially so in a democratic environment. In most circumstances, this is likely to lead to very difficult problems of resolving trade-offs between growth and redistribution. Consequently, combining growth with redistribution involves difficult tight-rope walking and requires all the political finesse that can be marshalled along with the basic commitment to both the democratic values and the social objective of eradicating poverty.

Is non-alignment a policy?

C. B. MUTHAMMA

IN March, 1983, the Seventh Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was held in Delhi. Nearly one hundred countries—two thirds of the membership of the United Nations—were represented. Liberation movements, notably PLO and SWAPO, participated as members. In addition many countries and organisations were present with observer or guest status. Their number had grown impressively since the first summit of Belgrade in 1961, where twenty-five full members and thirty seven observers had attended.

Non-alignment had grown out of the break-up of the colonial system

after the end of world war II and the simultaneous emergence of two bitterly hostile blocs. As early as 1946 Pandit Nehru, who had assumed charge of India's government preparatory to the formal inauguration of India's independence, declared that India would 'keep away from the power blocs or groups aligned against one another which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even greater scale.' Later he enlarged on this to say that if 'foreign relations go out of your hands into the charge of somebody else, to that extent and in that measure you are not independent... so our policy will continue to be not

only to keep aloof from alignments; but try to make friendly cooperation possible. We approach the whole world on a friendly basis.'

It was natural for India's first Prime Minister, a great leader of India's freedom struggle, to make this formulation. For long, colonial India's decisions, including in foreign policy, had been made by Imperial Britain. India's entry into the second world war, in the last stages of the freedom struggle, had also been declared by Britain without consulting Indian leaders. Equally, Pandit Nehru's understanding of world history and of the links between national and international affairs were distilled into this formulation. The emergence of blocs was not merely a post-war phenomenon—he had referred to 'power blocs...which have led in the past to world wars.'

It was a concept that found natural acceptance on many sides, by countries emerging from domination, whether direct domination like Indonesia, or indirect, like Egypt. It found a response also from Yugoslavia, which had fought under an indigenous communist leadership against Hitler, and saw itself as independent of outside forces, including the Soviet bloc. In sub-Saharan Africa too, as each country emerged into freedom, led by Ghana in 1957, it announced its adherence to non-alignment. Eventually, the Organization of African Unity enunciated non-alignment as one of its tenets. Latin America and the Caribbean began to trickle in, in the seventies.

What was the practical content and the impact of the non-aligned movement? If, as Pandit Nehru observed, wars had in the past also arisen from the formation of blocs, would the decision to 'keep away' from the blocs decrease the danger of war? Would this decision tackle the causes of the formation of such blocs in the first place? Would the danger that 'if foreign relations go out of your hands...to that extent you are not independent' be met by merely refusing to take sides? Would such a disengagement ensure that the newly liberated or the still subjected world would no longer be instruments to

serve the purposes of the great powers?

Would all these pre-occupations be invalid if there were only one bloc? In other words, is non-alignment a function of an independent policy, or independence a function of non-alignment?

Does alignment by itself circumscribe independence? The European members of NATO have voluntarily and in exercise of their independence entered into the alliance with the USA in accordance with their perception of their national self interest. Their policies vary from the independent nuclear programmes of Britain and France to the renunciation of independent nuclear weaponry by the others; from the acceptance of the stationing of NATO nuclear weapons by some, to the rejection of such stationing by others. It does not deter the FRG from pursuing its own 'Ostpolitik'.

On the other side, the People's Republic of China initially perceived an advantage in an alliance with the Soviet Union; when this view changed, the alliance was terminated. As of now, even under a strict and literal application of the criteria of non-alignment that have been spelt out, China, a non-member of NAM, is in all respects non-aligned. Its totally independent stance and its control of its domestic and foreign policies is, arguably, greater than that of many of the non-aligned countries. Among the nominally non-aligned are cases which constitute an opposite situation to China's — countries like Pakistan, whose policies after joining NAM are in essence not different from its policies as a member of CENTO and SEATO.

If alignment cannot be equated with dependence, can non-alignment be equated with independence? Has it saved decolonised nations from great power pressure, or enabled the still colonised peoples to be liberated? In 1971, India, threatened by the presence of a US warship in the Bay of Bengal, resorted to a friendship treaty with the Soviet Union. In many cases, even decolonisation depended on the existence of a countervailing power, and the non-aligned had no practical contribution to make.

In the case of Indonesia's freedom struggle, Dutch obduracy was curbed by US pressure on the Netherlands to withdraw from Indonesia, so as not to afford an opportunity for an alliance to materialise between the freedom fighters and the Soviet bloc. In Malaysia the existence of the communist guerillas fighting for freedom provided the principal incentive to the UK, with its perception of a potential Soviet bloc role (the bloc then included China which had come under a communist regime in 1949) to hand over power to local forces considered likely to maintain friendly relations with the West. In Africa, the war of liberation of Algeria in the fifties was helped by arms and supplies from the Soviet bloc, which still included China. The non-aligned had no practical contribution to make.

India, the largest non-aligned country, was not even prepared to recognise the Algerian government-in-exile, for fear of offending France with whom it hoped to negotiate the freedom of the French enclaves in India. This, in spite of Pandit Nehru's openly expressed misgivings earlier, that the NATO alliance would strengthen the hands of colonial powers in suppressing freedom movements. NATO had precisely that role, visibly and demonstrably, from the time of France in Algeria to Portugal in Angola and Mozambique and Britain in East, West and Central Africa — most recently in Zimbabwe. The freedom fighters of Zimbabwe are stated to have been supplied by the communist countries, with China (now for many years out of its Soviet alliance) in the dominant role. The NATO alliance still sustains the racist regime in South Africa — economically with trade and investments, militarily by the sale of equipment, and politically at the UN and through devices such as the contact group for Namibia. It has a defence interest in the Simonstown base.

The non-aligned countries have repeatedly called for a change. The West responds with pious denunciations of racism and colonialism, but in actual practice supports the existence of both, and the non-aligned do not have the ability to do anything effective.

Particularly notable were two significant wars of liberation in Asia and Africa — Vietnam, and former Congo, now Zaire. Vietnam had started its war of independence as early as 1942, against Japan (the French having collapsed in the early years of the war). After the war, the joint policies of Britain, France and the US to re-instate French control in Vietnam were checked by the victory of the freedom forces in 1954 in Dien Bien Phu. In the Geneva Conference that followed, the West aimed to gain at the conference table what it had lost on the battlefield. Having been soundly defeated, they nevertheless took the line that the freedom forces should control only the North. They went further. Whereas the traditional dividing line between North and South Vietnam had run along the sixteenth parallel, it was now moved northwards to the seventeenth parallel, further reducing the area conceded to the free forces.

India, the spokesman for decolonisation and for non-alignment, was carefully kept out of the conference. India sent Krishna Menon to Geneva uninvited. He hung around the periphery of the conference, with no say in it. After an agreement had been hammered out which denied to the Vietnamese the fruits of their victory, India was called upon to implement this agreement as Chairman of the Indo-China Commissions, lending its name to an anti-liberation settlement in the belief that it was advancing the cause of peace and non-alignment.

The case of the Congo was broadly comparable. Patrice Lumumba, the leader of the Congolese liberation movement, was seen as a threat to the West's influence, both because of his demand for freedom and because he was seen as enjoying the support of the communist bloc. As in Viet Nam, it was easy to set up puppet dissidents in Katanga and elsewhere to defy Lumumba's claim to leadership; and under the facade of the UN a military operation was mounted to 'protect' Lumumba — protect him from a population and a legislature both of which solidly supported him. Unlike the Korean operation earlier, where 'UN' troops were Americans, in the Congo, seven-

ral years later, the 'UN' troops who held the ring for the destruction of Lumumba were from ex-colonial countries, including non-aligned India and Ghana. Not surprisingly, the USSR refused to bear a share of the cost of this operation.

Non-alignment thus had little practical effect on the decolonisation of subject nations and peoples, except to the extent that the troops of the liberated countries like India were not available to fight colonial wars elsewhere. Each subject nation has fought its own lone war, like India, or was aided by the communist bloc.

Did non-alignment have an impact on the fortunes of those that had attained political freedom? To an extent, many of them have benefitted from the existence of two blocs. India not only signed the friendship treaty with the USSR in 1971, but for years, beginning even with its independence, was dependent on the Soviet veto on Kashmir in the UN. The West's post-Independence policy on India and Pakistan has been a continuation of Britain's pre-Independence policy in respect of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, and the Soviet Union has, in different contexts, sustained India's position against western pressure. It has made available supplies and technology in crucial sectors where these would not have been available from the West. But India also takes such help as is available from western sources.

This acceptance of help from both sides can be called non-alignment, but equally it can be called dependence on both blocs. It is the result of an inherent weakness that necessitates the existence of a second bloc as a countervailing factor, giving the non-aligned some room for manoeuvre. Each bloc is prepared to pay, in degrees considered appropriate, for the amity or neutrality of the non-aligned. In reverse, even those of the third world who are traditionally committed to one side, hold, as a card, the possibility of using the other side.

This joint dependence on both sides is a poor substitute for the strength of the non-aligned, though

it can cushion the transition to such strength. As of now, the West still controls, in different degrees, the raw materials, the trade, and economies of the third world. Even so-called aid now amounts to a net outflow of resources from the poor to the rich. The third world's debt is now in the region of seven hundred billion dollars.

The world's oceans and communications are controlled by the West, and underpinned by a long chain of bases. The West is in a position to distort the progress of these countries, as, for instance, the distortion of India's plans by forcing this country to respond to the West's re-arming of Pakistan. They can destabilise countries as they did Ghana, where Nkrumah was toppled by a manipulation of Ghana's principal export, cocoa; or as in Chile where a democratically elected regime was replaced with a complaisant dictatorship. Such dictatorships which hold the third world nations, their peoples and policies captive to great power interests are spread all around the world.

The great powers are also able to export wars by proxy to the third world, not only as part of their power policies but also to help their military industrial complexes to remain economical, and capable of sustaining their own re-armament programmes. So, if disarmament and peace and progress are the objectives of the non-aligned movement, far from achieving disarmament of the great powers, they are themselves forced into their own little arms races and wars. Such measures of disarmament as there are, or dialogues thereon, amongst the great powers, have clearly been the result of reasons inherent in their weapons race-budgetary constraints, technological obsolescence, or mutually perceived advantage in lowering the mutual sense of insecurity from the high technology threats, especially nuclear threats. In fact the world's arms expenditure (dominated by the great powers) continues to rise and is by now well above eight hundred billion dollars a year.

It is a situation in which the non-aligned have no effective say — not only on disarmament, but on any of

the contemporary world issues — Palestine, South Africa and Namibia, the North-South dialogue. Their weakness has resulted in forcing the frontline States into humiliating treaties with apartheid South Africa, which immobilises them in the fight for the liberation of the peoples of South Africa and Namibia.

Thus, in key issues affecting the vital interests of the third world, the decisions lie with others. There is so far no strategy (barring a few areas) to put the power of decision, individually and collectively, into the hands of the third world — a strategy which can steadily eliminate their conflicts and set in train a solid process of development, and do so at maximum speed. Both require a widely conceived, but flexible, strategy of cooperation. Such cooperation does not involve confrontation with the developed world, but equally does not leave decisions in their hands. The present cliché of South-South cooperation does not fill the bill. It is imitative of the West's aid policy, which is necessitated because the West does not identify itself with the interests of the third world, as the USA identified itself with European interests when it evolved Marshall Aid. But the countries of the third world do have a vested interest in each other's progress. Their collective and individual progress and independence are interlinked — what is required is less money rather than a new policy orientation.

The main benefit of non-alignment was that it started the desegregation of the Soviet Union, thus setting in motion a slow process of relaxation of tensions. The containment of the Soviet Union had for long been an important objective of Imperial policy. Before the war, Russia and China were seen as threats to Britain's Empire. India was hedged around on these borders, but even further afield there were measures aimed at bottling up the Russians, such as the Dardanelles treaty. The post-war western alliance evolved new versions of this containment theory, notably CENTO and SEATO. But, whereas a colonial India could be insulated against contact with the USSR, a free India could not be prevented from estab-

lishing relations and friendship and cooperation with that country.

This was also true of several other non-aligned countries. In ending the isolation of the Soviet Union, these countries gave themselves wider scope for free policies; but, equally, any such scope for freedom would have been much less feasible, even impossible, if the world had been dominated by one powerful bloc of allies bent upon establishing world hegemony. The atom bomb was used when only one country possessed the weapon.

Though initially there were several third world countries which combined their pro-western posture with a refusal even to establish diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and China, this situation has been gradually eroded. Countries considered traditionally pro-western, when facing a situation in which the West does not meet their requirements, turn to the Soviet Union. Some West-Asian allies of the West have in recent days turned to the Soviet Union for weapons supplies.

If blocs had, as stated by Pandit Nehru, even in the past led to wars; and if the current polarisation carried the same threat, non-alignment, by taking the blocs as a point of departure, did not address itself to the causes for these blocs, or to the weakness of the third world which deprived the latter of a say in world affairs. The spark for the second world war came from Germany and Japan which were shut out of the spoils of the colonial system. The system postulated the position of the third world as real estate available for the benefit of the great powers. The Charter of the League of Nations, which had talked of 'self-determination' for all nations, had the small nations of Central and Eastern Europe in mind. Freedom for the colonies was no more thinkable than freedom for domestic animals.

The third world is still the bone of contention, notwithstanding the *de jure* freedom of most of them. They are still the instruments of others' interests. It is significant that the main accusation of each bloc against the other is in terms of the third world. The Soviet Union ac-

cuses the West of imperialism—a policy of dominating the world and its resources. The West accuses the Soviet Union of expansionism—a policy of making inroads into the West's areas of control and dominance.

The latest example of this confrontation is Nicaragua. The USA is reacting hysterically to the independence of a tiny republic that is hardly visible on the map in comparison to the size of the USA, and even less comparable in terms of economic, military or other strength. Moreover, it is a couple of thousand miles away. This contrasts with America's (and the West's) persistent military aid to Pakistan which has a common border with India and has already attacked India several times with western weapons.

If the third world's weakness is the main factor pre-empting its power to influence world affairs, this is not substantially modified by non-alignment. If its weakness constitutes the basis for the rise of the blocs, leading, in turn, to a confrontation sustained by an arms race, the obvious problem to tackle is this weakness. But non-alignment, though justified so far as it goes does not, in fact, go very far. It is, in essence, a statement of what its proponents will not do: they will not take sides. It does not state what they will do. Some recognition of this problem is implicit in the clarification given by Pandit Nehru that it was not a passive policy but a positive one. It was further clarified as a policy of judging issues on merits. But what if the issues do not surface? Would there be no policy? After the Chinese attack on India we can discuss the issue on merits. But if we had a policy, there should have been no such attack. We can consider on merits the devastating famine and near economic collapse in Africa. But for years on end food and other production per capita has been falling, but there was no policy to reverse this—and there is, as of now, no policy.

A policy cannot limit itself to what it will not do. To be really a policy, it has to state to itself the situation it would wish to bring

about, and address itself to a strategy for the purpose. By the same token, it must anticipate dangers that can arise, and work out a strategy to pre-empt them.

There is no likelihood of the developed countries agreeing to a new economic order. Even those in the West who plead for a change do so in terms of enabling better markets and raw materials—in other words, the old colonial equation at a slightly up-dated level. The evidence is in front of us—ever since the second world war, every country which sought its freedom had to fight for it. It was not voluntarily given by the imperial powers. We still have Namibia and South Africa with us. Why then do people in the third world assume that the powerful countries which benefit from their control of third world resources, economies and markets, will abdicate such control?

The first step in any policy is to recognise that non-alignment, while valid in the context of relaxing world tensions and giving the non-aligned more scope for free policies, is counter-productive to the extent that it divides the third world into aligned and non-aligned; India's rejection of Iran's pleas for friendship in the days of its CENTO membership was negative in its results, and was redressed subsequently by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Secondly, the strictly nationalistic policies pursued by the majority of the third world, including key countries like India, are also counter-productive. A voluntary agreement to collaborate to mutual benefit is not a surrender of sovereignty. Not only EEC but ASEAN has shown that such policies make for faster economic growth and a steady erosion of intra-regional conflicts.

Such cooperation need not be limited to regional agreements. If, for instance, a genuinely operative South Asian Regional Cooperation should emerge, it does not in any way pre-empt an Asian or Indian move with or without help from other countries to get a developmental process going in Africa, in cooperation with African countries. The present state of near collapse

of Africa weakens the entire third world. A strong Africa could have resisted South Africa and its western supporters, but as supplicants for western aid in the Lome pact, which also perpetuates Africa's role as a supplier of raw materials to Europe, the necessary change is not likely. An economic regeneration in Africa would have a wider, stabler, and more beneficial impact on the world's economy and politics even than the OPEC cartel formation.

Even India, with its large base of human and material resources, and its undoubted progress, is faced with the fact that its rate of progress is inadequate whether in terms of its people's needs or in terms of the increasing gap between itself and the developed world. A cooperative framework in the South Asia region, even if one or two countries do not go the whole way, will have a beneficial effect on both the economic and security environment. By the same token, a wider strategy of third world cooperation would have the same results on a compounded scale.

The history of the third world countries is one of separately and in groups making themselves dependent on outside forces. The ex-British colonies are linked more to Britain than to each other. The Anglo-phone and Franco-phone countries are more linked to Britain or France than to each other, even though Britain and France themselves are coordinating their economy, defence and other policies. By and large, all of them, instead of cooperating, are rivals for the West's favours in aid and trade.

If it makes sense for the non-aligned to speak with one voice, it makes even more sense for them to act cooperatively to mutual benefit. If it makes sense for the group of seventy seven, (which now includes about one hundred and twenty five third world countries) to speak together in UNCTAD, it makes more sense for them to act together to strengthen each other's development and progress, and to pre-empt destructive hostilities among themselves. The verbal principles of NAM must be replaced by practical strategies for peace and progress.

The moral stream

SRI MADHAV ASHISH

THE past twenty years of misrule have brought us to a breakdown in cultural values and social morality which threatens the human state far more than the material and economic problems of overpopulation, shortages and inflation. The old order must change; but unless we revalue the criteria on which Indian society should be built, the new order it yields to will be as inequitable, corrupt and violent as the present one.

What gave and still gives to India its peculiar quality of 'Indian-ness'? The vendors of 'our cultural heritage' would have us believe it lies in such things as architecture, sculpture, art, literature and handicrafts — *things* which reflect but are not in themselves the inner qualities from which they spring. They neglect the outlook which gave rise to the forms. What view of man found expression in India's sculpted images of divinity? What unrealised human potential did the artist project into those divine forms? They were not projections of the desire for food, clothing, housing, uninhibited sexual play, and the leisure to watch television. They are images of the state of human perfection to which the soul aspires.

Cultural values stem from basic premises about the significance of

the universe and, in particular, of human life. In adopting the western economic system and its industrialisation, and in treating them as the world norm, we have unwittingly subscribed to the material premises of current western culture: a world view which regards human satisfaction as based on the satisfaction of man's material and mental needs alone.

While we are all aware that much of what is called Indian culture — e.g., caste, 'kitchen religion', fatalism — needs to be abandoned, the hard core of the culture, its basic premise, derives from so profound an insight into the nature of man and the universe that it must not be jettisoned, for it is capable of providing a source of those basic values on which any viable human society must be built. This premise is not just a value; it is rooted in experiential perception of the unity of being from whose truth descend ethical values and social standards.

Two immediate causes of the current social breakdown may be identified. Firstly, the adoption of inappropriate development policies, which were totally unsuited to the Indian reality. Secondly, the usurpation of political power by a group

whose interests were directly opposed to the humanitarian values embodied in the Constitution of India. In the current scheme of things, these two reinforce each other: industrial development providing the economic base for power politics.

The consequences threaten us with chaos. On the one hand, the population explosion and the enormously increased industrial consumption of raw materials have destroyed the village economy on which India's old social order was based. On the other hand, the road to development through industry and foreign trade, after a start that raised hopes of our reaching living standards comparable with those of the developed world, is being checked by the global consequences of over-consumption of raw materials associated with western-style development and its resulting degradation of the world environment.

These consequences are the logical outcome of a social order which assumes that the higher the material level of well-being and the greater the freedom from labour, the greater the satisfaction. Such a world view necessarily measures 'development' in terms that imply increased consumption of raw materials through industrial technology.

With the possible exception of the Chinese, all the current economic systems of the world — capitalism, State capitalism, and whatever the Soviet system may be if it is neither of these — are based on the same materialistic premise, namely, that if humanity's material and mental needs are satisfied, the rest can be left to look after itself.

Our peculiarly difficult situation compels the question of what other economic system could be more suited to India's needs than any of these known systems. The question has to be taken further, because Marxist communism, the readily available reply, is based on the same premise as the others.

It is this premise which has led to the glorification of science, technology and industry as being the harbingers of human well-being, and

this in turn has led logically to the over-consumption and environmental degradation previously mentioned. Any mere adjustment to the socio-economic order, based on the same premise, could not meet the current crisis, for it is a crisis not just of resources and their economic treatment but, more importantly, a crisis in strictly human affairs.

Any viable answer to the question should therefore be based on a reaffirmation of what constitutes human needs and their satisfaction, which in turn depends on mankind's self-evaluation.¹

In India we are still close enough to our pre-capitalistic and pre-materialistic past for us to appreciate the validity of alternatives to those doctrines of materialistic development which were thrust upon us by the small but very influential economic elite. These are the only people to have gained the coveted life-styles of the developed West. Whatever their political affiliations, they aim to retain their privileges against the mass poverty which is even now invading their urban islands of affluence.

The huge village and tribal populations are being driven by land shortage and the depletion of forests out of their old subsistence economy in which the material needs of life are obtained directly by labour, and into the market economy where labour and materials are traded for cash, thus losing their autonomy. The promised economic development has not materialised. They lack the power to claim a larger share of such development as has occurred. They cannot go forward and they cannot go back. It should go without saying that the laws ostensibly designed to improve conditions for this section of the populace are, for the most part, mere window-dressing.

1. Cf. 'What our age needs is the reaffirmation, for its own conditions and its own needs, of the essential values of human life. Tradition fails us and will betray us if we trust to it...We cannot restore a past society, even if the haze of history hides its evils from us; we must rebuild society for ourselves, learning from the past what lessons and what warnings we are capable of learning.' (Robert M. MacIver. Foreword to Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation*.)

Between these two groups lie the employees of industry, government and commerce, people who have moved away from the villages, are almost wholly geared to the cash economy, enjoy many of the benefits of development — in the sense that their homes contain more industrial products and consumer goods — but find themselves blocked from further progress by rising prices, widespread corruption and the other symptoms of a growing social and economic crisis.

Almost all the people of all these social groups are suffering from what is called a crisis of identity. The crisis differs in mode and in degree, but it is essentially the same problem. The nation as a whole has moved away from the old social identities, based on the status of family, caste, village, etc., but has not moved fully into identification with the industrial world's individualism, where social groupings are dominated by shared economic and political interests.

This is not a peculiarly Indian problem, for it is shared with much of the third world and, though in a different mode, with much of the developed world where the logical consequences of the capitalistic system are threatening to destroy the economic basis of the social order. However, the manner in which the people of India will seek solutions to the problem will be rooted in the past and present social and cultural systems of India.

The failure of most economic predictions about human behaviour stems from the view of man as an economic animal, governed entirely by economic compulsions. While it cannot be denied that the science of economics has provided important keys to the understanding of human behaviour and to the analysis of history, it is a mistake to ignore other 'psychological determinants' than the desire for security, comfort and health, and the drives of personal ambition and profit.

A person also needs to feel he has an honourable place in his society — a requirement that cannot be generally satisfied in societies whose economic ethos limits respect to the

inevitably few people who are successful in monetary terms. Where the sole achievement which wins respect is the accumulation and display of monetary wealth, its inherent inability to yield lasting human satisfaction is displayed by its insatiability.

On the subject of European socialism, Barbara Tuchman writes: 'To the workers who increasingly voted for it ... Socialism gave self-respect and an identity. A working man could feel himself no longer an ignored, anonymous member of a herd, but a citizen with a place in society and a political affiliation of his own.'² Such a motive for joining a movement, even though unrecognised, is as significant as the desire for economic benefits promised by the movement.

In India, the huge increase in population has not been matched by corresponding growth in industrially related employment, nor have our national leaders acted in such a way as to arouse popular enthusiasm for participation in a trans-individual national development. All the real achievements of the nation have been monopolised by individual politicians, the ruling party, and the 'government' as contributing to their image of omnipotence. In consequence, even the beneficiaries of the system feel themselves frustrated in their personal need for recognition, and deprived of opportunity for rewarding participation in a trans-personal aim.

It is evident that people have many identities: family, social group, professional, national, etc. The most important identity is the one which gives a man his greatest sense of personal significance. This varies between different people, according to their individual characters. Very few people are so well integrated that they stand as individuals whose sense of significance is independent of socially approved images of significance. The majority of people need to feel themselves supported by the 'togetherness' of a group, whose interests they share—family, trades union, political party, corporate team, village community, etc.,—and they borrow their sense

of significance from the felt significance of the group. In short, the majority of people gain a significant sense of identity only through personal association with aims that are trans-individual in the sense that they are shared with and supported by groups whose solidarity gives reassurance.

Again, for the majority, the size of the group needs to be limited to the numbers one person can easily encompass in his sense of personal relatedness. If it is greater, depersonalisation begins to undermine directly human relationship. There are occasions, such as mass political rallies and national war emergencies, when the personal identity is submerged in the self-transcendence (or self-degradation) of mass hysteria. But these are special occasions which do not give a lasting sense of personal significance.

This question of the scale on which personal relationship or personal values can operate healthily, formed an important part of Gandhiji's concept of the autonomous Indian village as the basis of an humanitarian Indian economy, for the base of the national economy should be within the comprehension of the people who make up the nation. The average Indian village is roughly on this scale. Although it might be argued that the destruction of the old village economy—a destruction in which heavily centralised government has played a large part—was necessary to break the stranglehold of caste on community life, it remains a fact that the old social identities have been lost, and that they have not been replaced by new ones.

Only a small part of the population has succeeded in getting on to the development bandwagon and temporarily achieved a new sense of identity with the aims and achievements of the developed world. The rest, finding themselves uprooted from their traditional backgrounds and frustrated of the promises of development, are in a mid-region limbo where they feel themselves to belong neither to the one world nor to the other. They are therefore vulnerable to movements which promise them a sense of being some-

thing significant, of giving them a sense of identity. The gain of an identity gives immediate satisfaction, even though the promised economic benefits are never more than 'pie in the sky'. An articulate aim makes a man someone who is presently working for that aim, particularly if it is reinforced by the approval of a similarly identified group.

This factor contributes to many of the socio-political movements which are causing India so much trouble, and largely accounts for their mass appeal. Frustrated in their early expectations for a great and new Indian nationalism, communities are turning back in assertion of their local identities: Maharashtra for the Maharashtrians, Assam for the Assamese, Khalistan for the Sikhs, etc. And in reaction to the failure of national secularism, we have such movements as the Virat Hindu Samaj with its attempts to revivify the Hindu identity—a movement which confuses the mythological beliefs of a geographically identified religious community with the completely trans-national and trans-ethnic truths of mystical perception.

The situation within which such movements have arisen stems from many mistakes in the past which might have been avoided by leaders of greater intelligence and integrity, for there was no dearth of voices, from Gandhiji onwards, telling us that we were following policies unsuited to the needs and aspirations of the Indian peoples, even though it was not then appreciated, and hardly is now, that the era of capitalist economics is drawing to a close.

The people who opposed India's entry into twentieth-century industrial economics appeared to have no clear alternatives in mind. Even Gandhiji, in a personal conversation, admitted that he hoped only to delay the impact of industrialisation. The opposition appears to have been based on feelings that something of immense value to India, and even the world, would be lost if India's undefined though philosophically based sacramental culture were to be swamped by the crude materialism associated with the western style of profit-oriented industry and com-

2. Barbara Tuchman: *The Proud Tower*.

merce. On the other hand, the proponents of industrialisation were clear about their aims, and they regarded old world values as expendable in the interests of a material well-being which, according to the doctrine of development, would be available to all.

The industrialists, rather naturally, got their way. The population of India was half its present size, the world was unaware of the impending global shortage of raw materials, and the first proposal was only to lay down the basic industries required for any sort of improvement in the life conditions of the Indian peoples, regardless of their economic or political leanings.

With the wisdom of hindsight, we might now be able to articulate the objectors' feelings. The objection was not so much to industry in itself (except to the extent that there was an element of Luddite resistance to machines replacing manual workers) as it was to the western economic ethos — competitive, exploitative, profit-oriented, materialistic, impersonal, dehumanising, expansionist — which seemed to be imported along with the machinery whose mass production of goods required unnatural concentrations of labour and raw materials, on the one hand, and the growth of a western-style market, on the other. The market, with its advertising, distributing agencies and sales organisations, would spread the poison of the capitalist, ego-oriented profit motive all over the country, corroding whatever good was left in the old economic ethos, in which wealth was linked to social responsibility, and replacing it by the new ethos, in which money is accumulated for irresponsibly selfish gains.

In writing of culture contact, Karl Polanyi says '... the contact may have a devastating effect on the weaker part. Not economic exploitation, as often assumed, but the disintegration of the cultural environment of the victim is then the cause of the degradation. The economic process may supply the vehicle of the destruction, but the immediate cause of his undoing is not for that reason economic; it lies in the lethal injury to the institutions in which his social existence is embodied. The

result is loss of self-respect and standards.'³

It is an index of the weakness in pre-industrial India's predominantly Hindu society that the old value system crumbled at the touch of materialism. It shows that for the majority of Hindus the *Sanatan Dharma* did not constitute an internalised system of values whose firm principles could be adapted to changing circumstances. Lip service was paid to high ideals, while the real business of living was controlled not so much by ethical values as by the social web of interdependence which characterises any feudalistic society.

When the social and material conditions changed, values changed accordingly. One example will suffice: the Indian's dignified acceptance of death as a satisfactory and meaningful transition from this world to an after-death state, interpreted as varying with the individual's evolutionary status, was rapidly abandoned with the appearance of medical services which promised, and sometimes produced, considerable prolongation of the body's life. From being an illusion which it was man's duty to transcend, the material world became the only reality, and this in spite of constant reaffirmations of the supremacy of consciousness over seeming materiality by living Indian seers up to the present day.

Yet, the fact remains that many of us who have not sold our souls utterly to the rupee, and who still have a place in our hearts for those imponderable values which are consonant with mankind's perennial aspirations for perfection, feel the need not merely to find a personal identity in some social, religious or political groups, but far more importantly, to rediscover our roots in the ever-present source of the culture that was India, a culture that was rich in trans-personal significance.

This has nothing to do with the reversions to the study of Sanskrit, to classical song and dance, folk art, religious revivalism, or any other revival of what is called 'our

3. Karl Polanyi. *The Great Transformation*. (Abbreviated.)

cultural heritage'. What is sought is close to the mystic's answer to the question of identity, which stresses the identity of the individual with the universal — finding oneself by transcending the ego-centred self and its mundane identifications. The emptiness of a self-fulfilment measured in terms of competitive achievement in the rat race has been seen. What is lacking is the satisfaction of total participation in an aim which transcends merely private gratification.

At the core of Indian culture lies the seer's experiential perception of the *real*, and of the significance of human life in relation to that reality — or its insignificance, according to one's viewpoint. In the past, the nation-wide acceptance of the seer's perception gave to Indians of all communities and all walks of life a quality of superior humanity which, to many foreigners, made India seem beyond all other countries the land of the spirit, and, to Indians, made foreigners, with all their wealth of industry and arms, seem humanly immature. In short, the Indian's sense of identity was not limited to family, caste, community, etc. Over and above these social labels and never far distant from his waking thoughts was his sense of participation in the play of divine forces which rule the world. To obtain a human birth was great good fortune, conferring both dignity and responsibility — responsibility for living as a human being should.

How a human being should behave is a question over which controversy has raged since man first walked the planet. Societal norms, which developed from the interplay of mankind's idealistic and material needs, have followed a pattern of growth and decay in a process of change brought about by inherent contradictions. In the capitalist era, the dominant idealism has viewed human well-being in terms of material well-being — the enjoyment by all of the benefits of material and technological progress. Conflict has arisen only over the inequitable sharing of wealth which prevents the equality of material well-being, or even humanly adequate well-being. Mankind's spiritual needs have been largely ignored, even though the

passion with which socialism has been promoted derives from an (unacknowledged) feeling perception of human significance. For, had humanity no ultimate significance, the suffering caused by inequitable distribution of wealth would have no significance, either of the ultimate or immediate kind.

No real purpose would be served by comparing the social effects of different systems of morality which themselves derive from different levels of mystical and religious perception — comparisons that might be invidious. The argument is that both eastern and western cultural groups should return to their root interpretations of human significance in order to find a more satisfactory basis for the socio-economic order than the current one which is leading to global disaster. In the Indian view the roots of Indian culture lie closer to the truths of man's essential nature and closer to the surface of the Indian mind than do the western, and are therefore more likely to prove valid as sources of inspiration when seeking solutions to the Indian aspect of the global problem.

One reason for the growing restiveness in the world population is the perception that world resources cannot match the expected level of material well-being. Another is that the view of earth from space, hailed as symbolising man's highest technological achievement and interpreted as foreshadowing man's conquest of the universe, in fact places our personal and social affairs in a perspective where to measure their significance only in material and technological terms is ridiculous.

It might appear to be one of life's inherent contradictions that technological achievement itself provides us with a view of ourselves which makes nonsense of any solution to human problems framed in technological terms. The significance of human life lies neither in the equitable distribution of scarce commodities, nor in the inequitable enjoyment of scarce luxuries. The significance of worldly life lies somewhere beyond itself. Any proposed solution that leaves out this trans-

cendental component of life must fail for lack of relevance to reality.

It is in this context that India stands out in the world as a land where the transcendental significance of human life is still recognised, where the man of spiritual attainment is still honoured, and the path of spiritual inquiry is still accepted as a valid life aim and occupation. Unlike in the countries of the developed world, here the immaterial roots of consciousness and being are not so deeply buried that they need heavy excavation to rediscover them. Their reflection can be discovered at the back of every Indian's mind, even in the minds of our seemingly uprooted intelligentsia who have outwardly aligned themselves with the western life-style and all that it stands for.

It is due to the shallow nature of the overlay that there is so much confusion over the definition of Hinduism, for the average Hindu at one moment professes adherence to the universal truths of the *Upanishads*, and at the next is a fetishist, making offerings to a particular temple idol for his son's success in competitive examinations. Yet, it is these universal truths, the monopoly of no religion, which constitute the hard core of Indian culture, a core which is found as much in the strong Sufi influence in Muslim India as in the Upanishadic influence on Hinduism. They are not absent from the West, but the Christian Church has in general distributed only religious dogma to the mass of the people. The lack of truths transcending dogma in the mind of the common man has contributed strongly to the decline in religious belief which has made 'God' an increasingly empty word in western culture.

At this time of crisis in human affairs, when the purely material solutions to life's problems are proving illusory, even in the countries from which we adopted them, nothing would be served by seeking further foreign models on which to base our hopes for salvation. Nor is it being suggested that we should turn to some sort of religious fundamentalism, as have the Iranians, for that would be merely reactionary

and would exacerbate communal differences. Our Indian identity lies ready to hand: individuals in identity with whom the universal spirit works out the patterns of its fundamental harmony. The fact is universal; but it has to be *called* Indian because, alone among nations, the possibility of its realisation as a guide to meaningful existence lies available at the core of the Indian culture, whereas it is more deeply buried elsewhere.

It has to be stressed that this is not a simplistic proposal, such as that meditation on the Brahman or the eternal verities would solve any one of our material problems or even, in itself, check corruption and other forms of moral degradation. Nor does it subscribe to the silly gambit, played by some of our foreign envoys, that India, as it is, is qualified to send government-sponsored spiritual missions into the world.

The point being made is that, world problems being the sum of individual problems, the sum of individualistic, ego-oriented, competitive viewpoints must, in an overcrowded and resource-short country, result in the situation we have today, where a few people enjoy luxurious living standards while half the population or more is increasingly under-nourished and deprived. Followed to its conclusion, some form of chaos must supervene.

Two logical alternatives present themselves. One is to take the cynically inhuman attitude of a Stalin, which unflinchingly contemplates the solution of such a problem as overpopulation by a combination of starvation, disease and bullets, and the problem of economic corruption by spies and summary punishment. The other is to take a stand on what one believes or feels to be mankind's potential for good, and to pursue policies which aim to realise that potential, hedging them with rewards and punishments that steer people towards realisation of their own higher qualities. What one means by 'good' and 'higher' depends on one's personal or culturally inherited vision of human potential. It is in this realm that India excels.

Index

SEMINAR ISSUES 1984

SEMINAR 293: January 1984; **This India:** a symposium on the occasion of our twenty fifth year of publication

Ashish, Sri Madhav	Framework for survival
Bhagat, Dhiren	Elites and the notion of satisfaction
Correa, Charles	Consciousness II
Datta-Chaudhuri, Mrinal	Two nations in one
Karnad, Bharat	The adjustable society
Katrak, Kersy	Revifitation
Kothari, Rajni	'Grassroots'
Krishna, Raj	Stagnant parameters
Lal, Sham	Four dialogues
Mohan, Dinesh	Virus on the campus
Mehta, Jagat S.	Third world militarisation
Moraes, Dom	Bharatiya images
Nandy, Ashis	Of utopias and faiths
Sahgal, Nayantara	Thoughts on dynasties
Sen, Samar	NAM
Singh, Jaswant	Secure and screwed
Thapar, Romila	Continuous beginnings

SEMINAR 294: February 1984; **The Punjab Tangle:** a symposium on the dimensions of a crisis

Bombwall, K.R.	Ethno-nationalism
Gujral, I.K.	The Sequence
Khanna, K.R.	Sanctuary
Latifi, Danial	Sanctuary
Noorani, A.G.	Sanctuary
Puri, S.S.M.	Sanctuary
Sareen, Rajendra	Sources of trouble
Sathyamurthy, T.V.	Crises within the crisis
Singh, Attar	What went wrong
Tandon, Prakash	Another angle

SEMINAR 295: March 1984; **Marxian Shadings:** a symposium on some thinking around an ideology.

Bose, Arun	India: the colonial period
Chatterjee, Partha	The peasantry
Manimala, Varghese	Concept of morality
Mukherjee, Rudrangshu	Through the historians looking-glass
Sahasrabudhey, Sunil	Alienation
Singh, Narinder	Paradigm lost

SEMINAR 296: April 1984; **Directions in Education:** a symposium on our frameworks of learning.

Arora, V.N.	Special inputs for the backward
Ashish, Sri Madhav	Relating to reality
Dabholkar, Devdatta	The problem
Jalaluddin, A.K.	Training a people
Singh, Amrik	The baby sitting years
Swamv, Dalip S.	Subversion of universities

SEMINAR 297: May 1984; **Values in Learning:** a symposium on the recent directives to schools.

Chandra, Pratap	Indian 'uniqueness'?
Jayaram, N.	Towards a 'culture of silence'
Kumar, Krishna	Aims and politics
Kunnunkal, Fr. T.V.	The secular state
Shukla, S.	Some considerations
Sykes, Marjorie	Moral education

SEMINAR 298: June 1984; **A Coalition Future:** a symposium on a changing political climate.

Abraham, A.S.	Reflection of differentiation
Dandavate, Madhu	Some preconditions
Namboodiripad, E.M.S.	Means to an end
Paranjape, H.K.	The logic
Singh, Jaswant	The imperative
Singh, L.P.	Learning from experience

SEMINAR 299: July 1984; **The New Elites:** a symposium on the changed character of the sub-continent's ruling groups

Kothari, Rajni	The politicians
Kumar, Krishna	Educational dialectic
Mahajan, Vijay	Vehicles of change
Sethi, Harsh	The undesired aliens
Singh, K.K.	Rural restlessness
Sivakumar, Chitra	Heroes of the future

SEMINAR 300: August 1984; **The Sexist Media:** a symposium on how patriarchy exploits the woman.

Agarwal, Bina and	Action for change
Bhasin, Kamla	Hindi journals
Deshpande, Anjali	Re-marketing the whore
Kapoor, Nina	Hidden face of patriarchy
Krishnan, Prabha	Struggling for space
Madhok, Sujata	The problem
Mozumdar, Modhumita	The magazine scene
Ramesh, Asha	

SEMINAR 301: September 1984; **A Federal Remedy:** a symposium on the constitutional provision for an interstate council.

Dharma Vira	The human approach
Iyer, V.R. Krishna	A futuristic exploration
Mitra, Ashok	Important preconditions
Mukarji, Nirmal	The relevant question
Narain, Govind	The dangers
Narula, R.S.	Urgent need
Singh, Jaswant	A backgrounder

SEMINAR 302: October 1984; **Lawless Laws:** a symposium on the misuse of the judicial process.

Baxi, Upendra	The dying of habeas corpus
Bhushan, Laxmikant	Ferocious aspects
Jaitley, Arun	Press fetters
Mazumdar, Sudip	Undertrials: a living hell
Nayar, Rajiv	The problem
Sharma, Atul	Escape routes
Tripathi, Parag P.	The persisting dilemmas

SEMINAR 303: November 1984; **Pakistani Perceptions:** a symposium which presents the views of a neighbour.

Ahmed, Feroz	Nationality rights
Ahmed, Akbar S.	Arain ethic
Akram, Lt Gen. A.I.	Detente
Ali, S. Babar	An economic perspective
Gardezi, Hassan N.	The military
Hussain, Mushahid	Tight-rope walking
Nizami, Arif	South-asian cooperation

SEMINAR 304: December 1984; **Indira Gandhi 1917-1984:** some thoughts on a sixteen year reign.

Aiyar, Swaminathan	The legacy
Datta-Ray, Sunanda K.	At many levels

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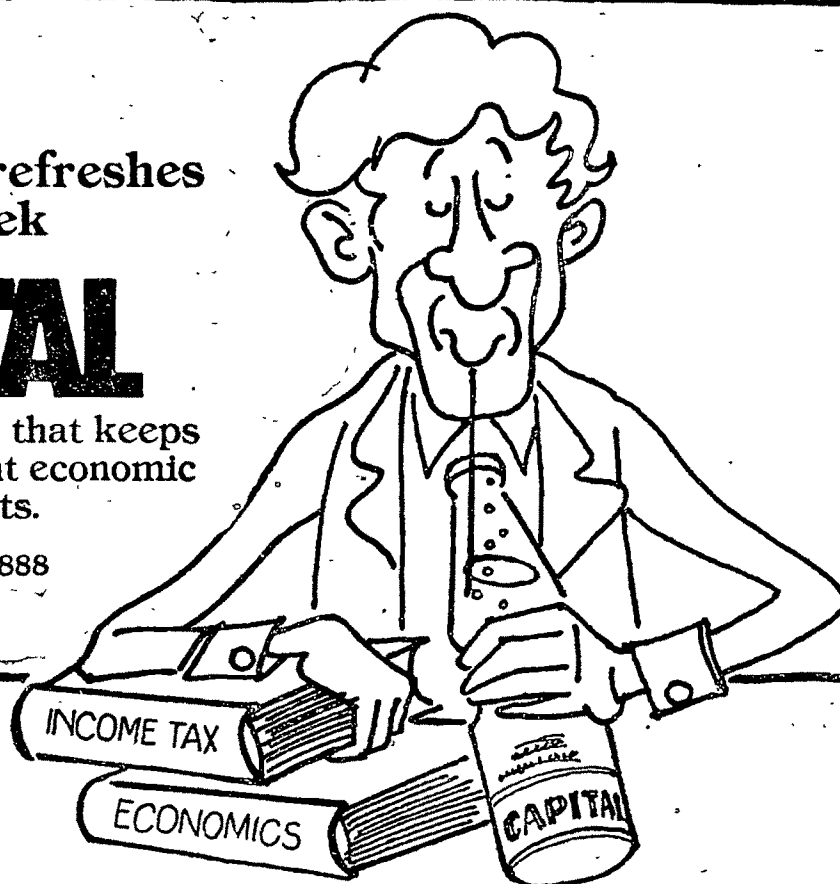
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INDIA AFTER INDIRA GANDHI: 1985-1990

New Equations in the Popular Mood

The brutal assassination of Indira Gandhi on October 31 may not have changed the course of Indian history over the long haul, but, for the shorter period, almost everything she handled calls for review. The succession of Rajiv Gandhi to the Prime Ministership was happily swift and unanimous, but some areas of policy and many personality equations must undergo change. Meanwhile the massive upsurge of popular feeling must necessarily have large political components. One of these, which calls for an immediate evaluation, is that of voting behaviour in the Lok Sabha elections which, rightly, are to be held as scheduled. Indira Gandhi dominated the electoral scene: her charisma held in every State eclipsing every leader of the Opposition. Will Rajiv Gandhi, now with massive goodwill on his side, do equally well?

The Indian Institute, in the altered environment, is doing fresh surveys to ascertain popular response to the departure of Indira Gandhi, to the arrival of Rajiv Gandhi and the manner in which national integration is to be approached. And how much patience will continue in the areas where Indira Gandhi, for all her wonderful leadership, was unable to record much success: the removal of destitution and the feeling of wide disparities particularly between urban and rural areas?

The Economic Review, largely a detailed study of all elements of the Seventh Plan, will be an even larger exercise with authorities on Agriculture, Industry, Banking, Transport, Trade and Finance, contributing thought-provoking aspects, calling for changes in policies so as to accelerate growth and provide more rapid social justice. The hope is that these studies will provide a critique of the Plan and a basis for policy-making for India's new Central Government and her new Lok Sabha.

Ghosh, Sailen The unstable foundation
 Rushdie, Salman An awakening or the whirlwind?
 Subramaniam, K.N. A balance sheet
 Thapar, Romesh Indira in history

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

Kumar, Devendra The New Elites
 Lawless Laws

Limaye, M.S. The Sexist Media
 Values in Learning
 The Punjab Tangle

Nayar, M.P. A Coalition Future
 Directions in Education

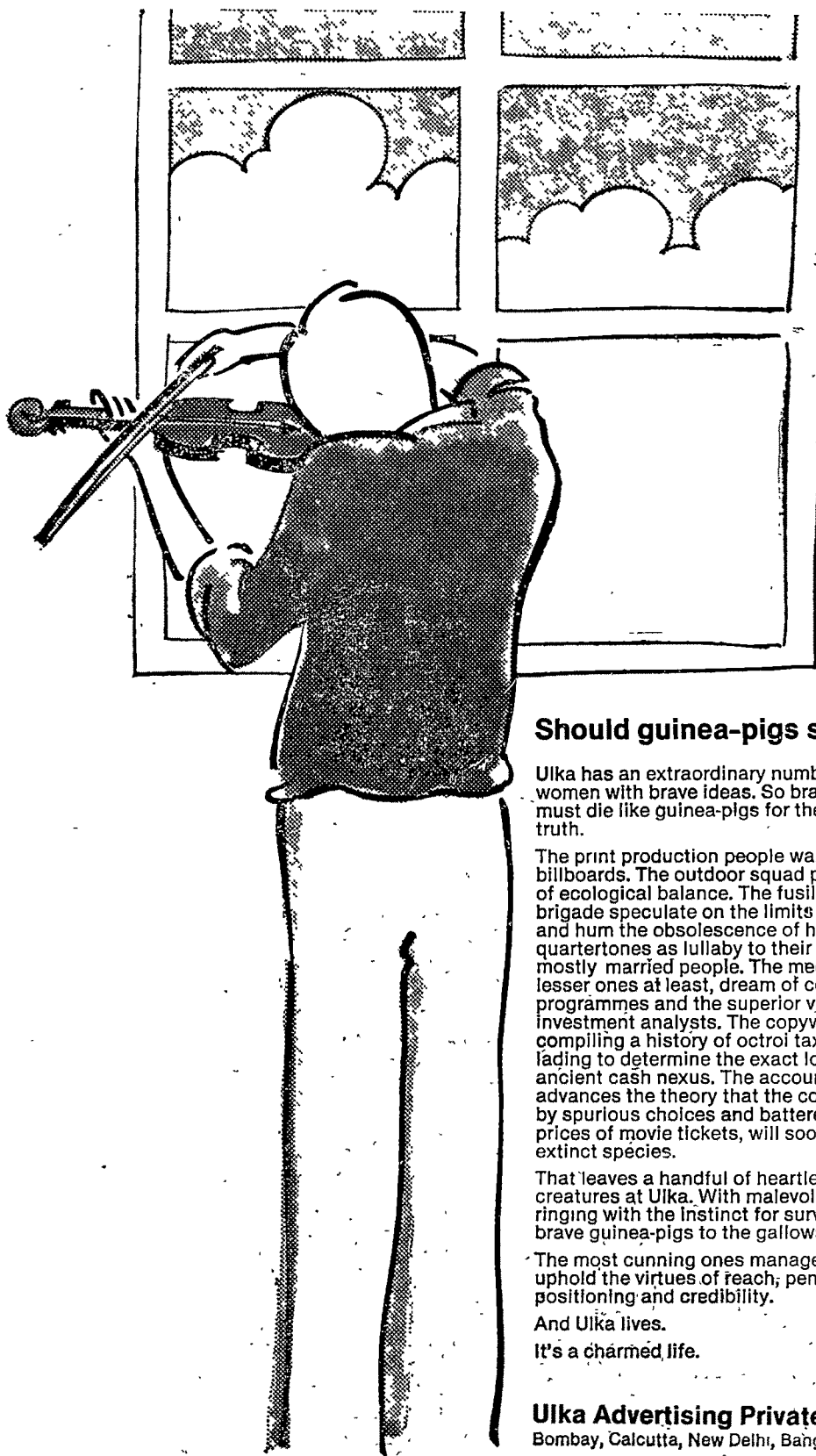
SEMINAR ISSUES

1. The Party in Power	September	1959
2. Food	October	1959
3. Freedom and Planning	November	1959
4. Changing Village	December	1959
5. Co-ops	January	1960
6. Two Sectors	February	1960
7. Our Universities	March	1960
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Should guinea-pigs survive?

Ulka has an extraordinary number of men and women with brave ideas. So brave that the ideas must die like guinea-pigs for the cause of scientific truth.

The print production people want to laminate billboards. The outdoor squad preaches the values of ecological balance. The fusiliers of the art brigade speculate on the limits of video cassettes and hum the obsolescence of halftones and quartertones as lullaby to their kids. These are mostly married people. The media gnomes, the lesser ones at least, dream of computer programmes and the superior varieties aspire to be investment analysts. The copywriters are compiling a history of octroi taxes and bills of lading to determine the exact location of the ancient cash nexus. The account servicing corps advances the theory that the consumer, befuddled by spurious choices and battered by the soaring prices of movie tickets, will soon become an extinct species.

That leaves a handful of heartless, right thinking creatures at Ulka. With malevolent eyes and ears ringing with the instinct for survival, they send the brave guinea-pigs to the gallows.

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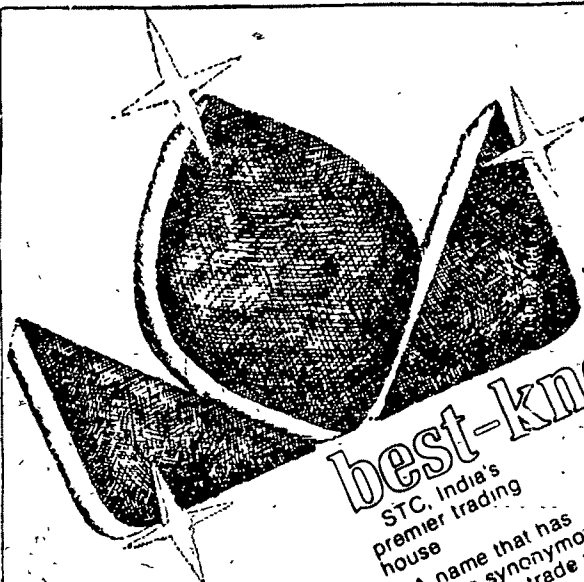
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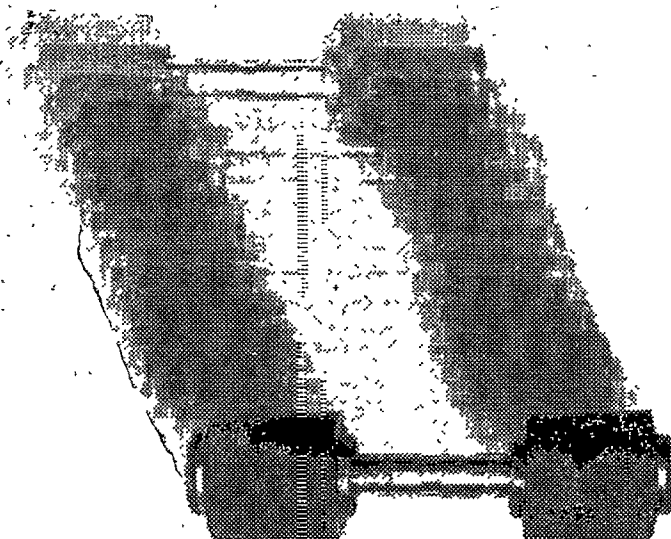
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Why RANBAXY'S GARLIC PEARLS?

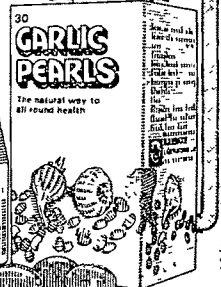
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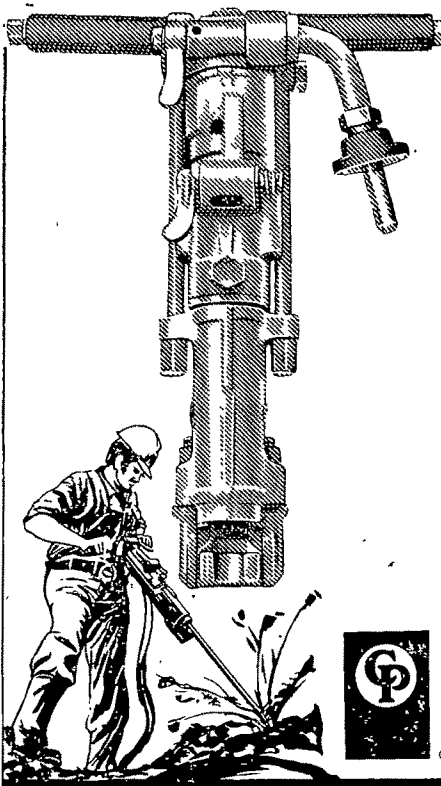
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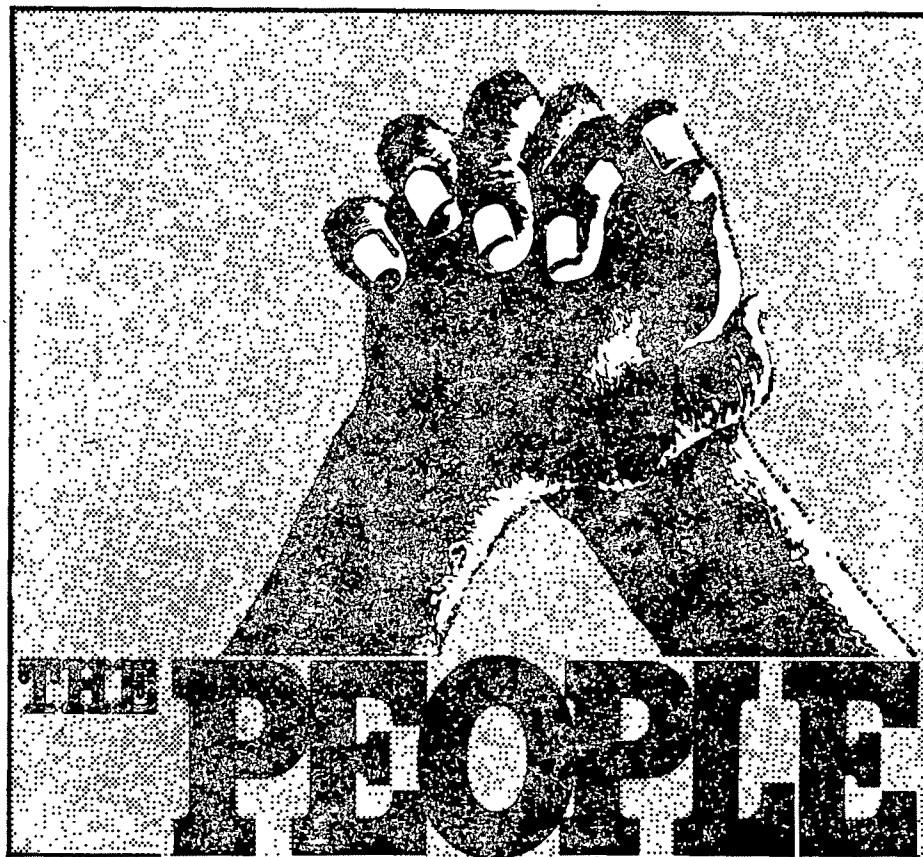
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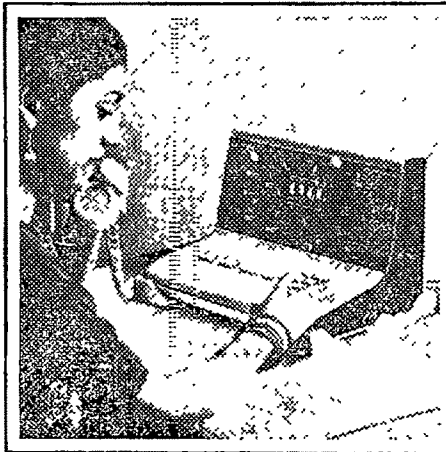
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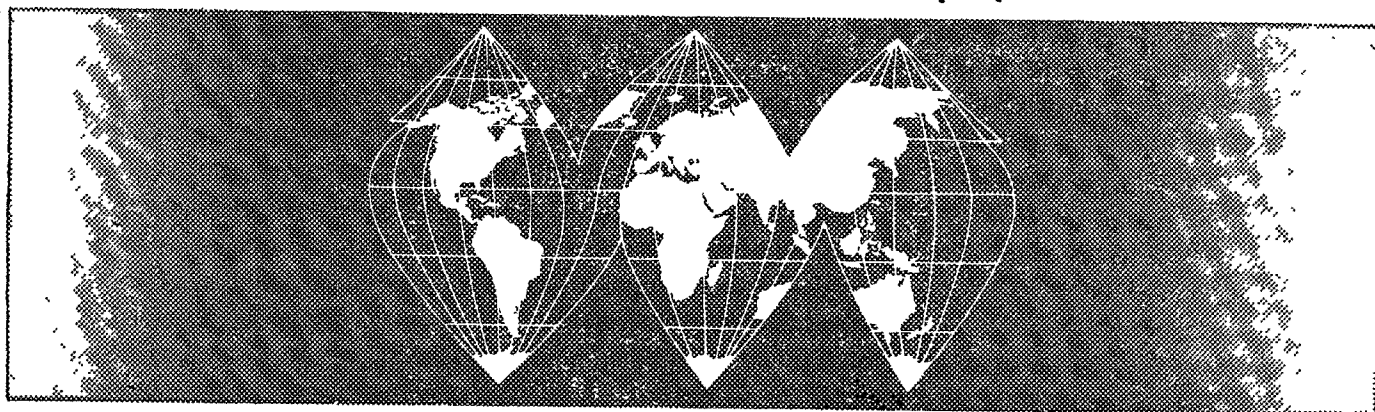
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...You could be Deceiving Yourself

Do You know?

Some times unscrupulous traders pass off bad and spurious goods under the guise of saving you tax by not giving a bill.

Most commodities are already covered under single point tax i.e., the tax has already been paid at the first point of sale in the State. So, if the dealer does not make a bill saying that it saves you tax, it is not true. You could only be a participant in breaking the law. Remember, the law requires the dealer to issue a bill for every sale exceeding Rs. 50/-.

In most commodities you are required to pay a low rate of sales tax. Avoiding this little tax could prove dangerous for you and your loved ones, apart from making you an unwitting partner in breaking the law. And what is more you do not stand to benefit at all.

Most civic minded, honest citizens insist on a bill and don't mind paying tax where it is due. Because they know that the revenue earned from Taxes is used by the Government for public welfare — laying more and better roads, improving sanitation, providing electricity, improving water supply, setting up hospitals, and to generate a better standard of living etc.

SALES TAX — YOUR IGNORANCE COULD BE EXPENSIVE TO YOU, TO THE GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY.

The tax rates on some of the consumer items are:

<i>Commodities/Products</i>	<i>Sales tax rates</i>
Cereals and Pulses and Edible Oils (Non-refined)	2%
Edible Oils (Refined)	4%
Butter, Ghee and Cheese packed in sealed containers	6%
Vanaspathi including Dalda, Pakav and all other hydrogenated Oils.	8%
Toilet soaps, Washing soaps, soap flakes, soap powders, Detergent powders	8%
Tinned, Canned and Bottled foods & fruits like Jams, Squashes, Horlicks etc.	8%
Medicinal & Pharmaceutical preparations	8%
Crockery and Cutlery	8%
Stainless Steel articles and articles made of plastic	10%
Electrical goods, e.g., Fans, Bulbs, Stoves, Grinders etc.	10%
Toilet articles like Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Hair Oil etc.	12%
Coffee and Tea	10%
Readymade garments (costing Rs. 50/- and above)	6%
Motor tyres and tubes	10%

In addition, the law demands a surcharge of 10% and a Rural Development Cess of 10% on tax.

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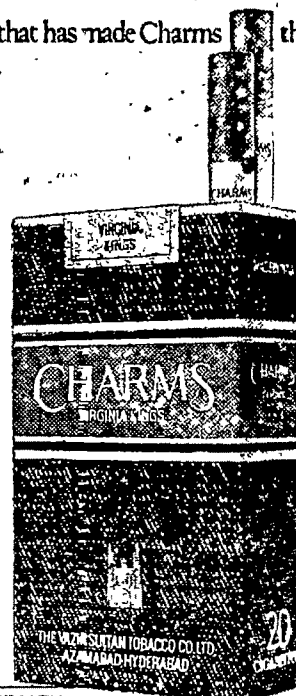
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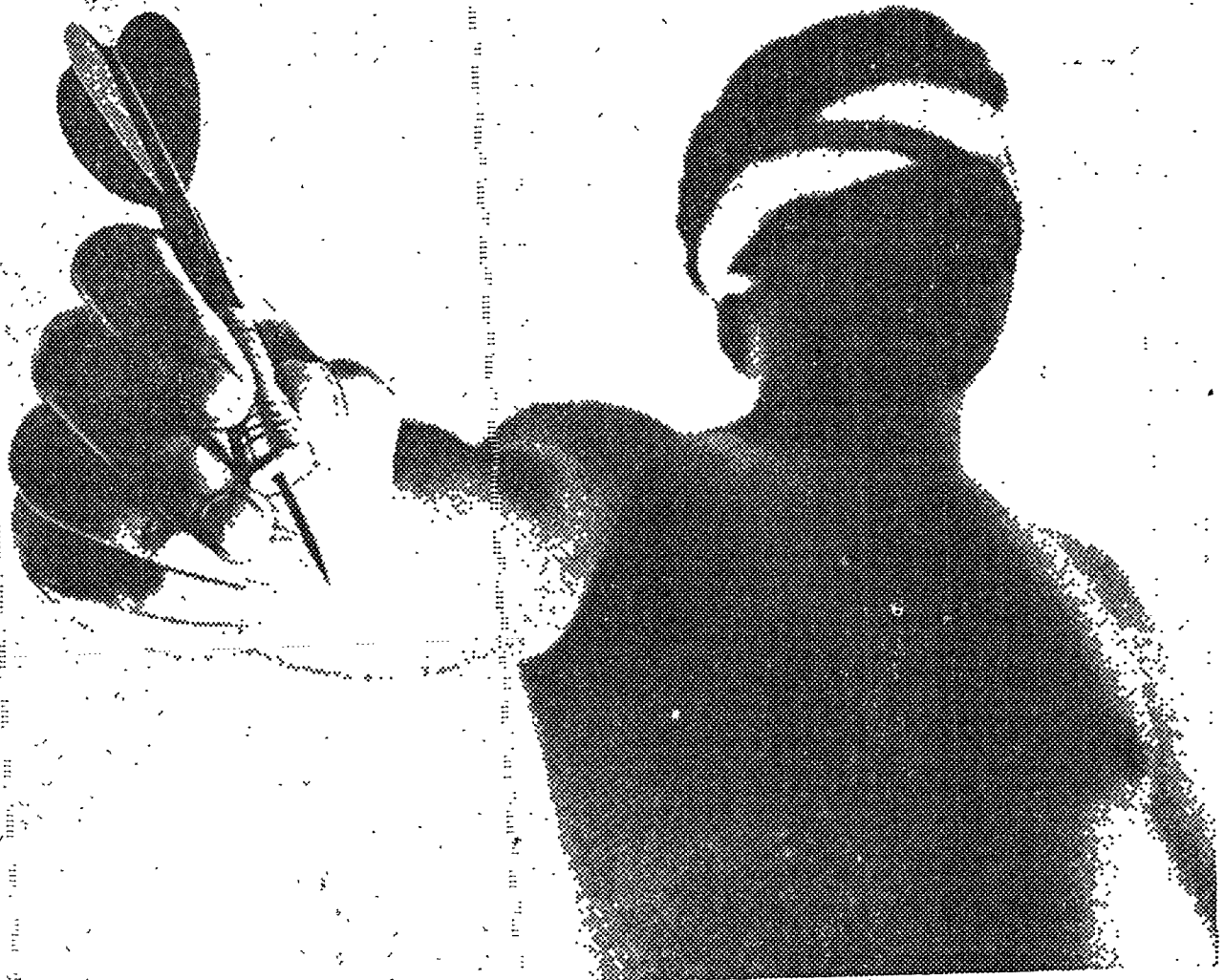
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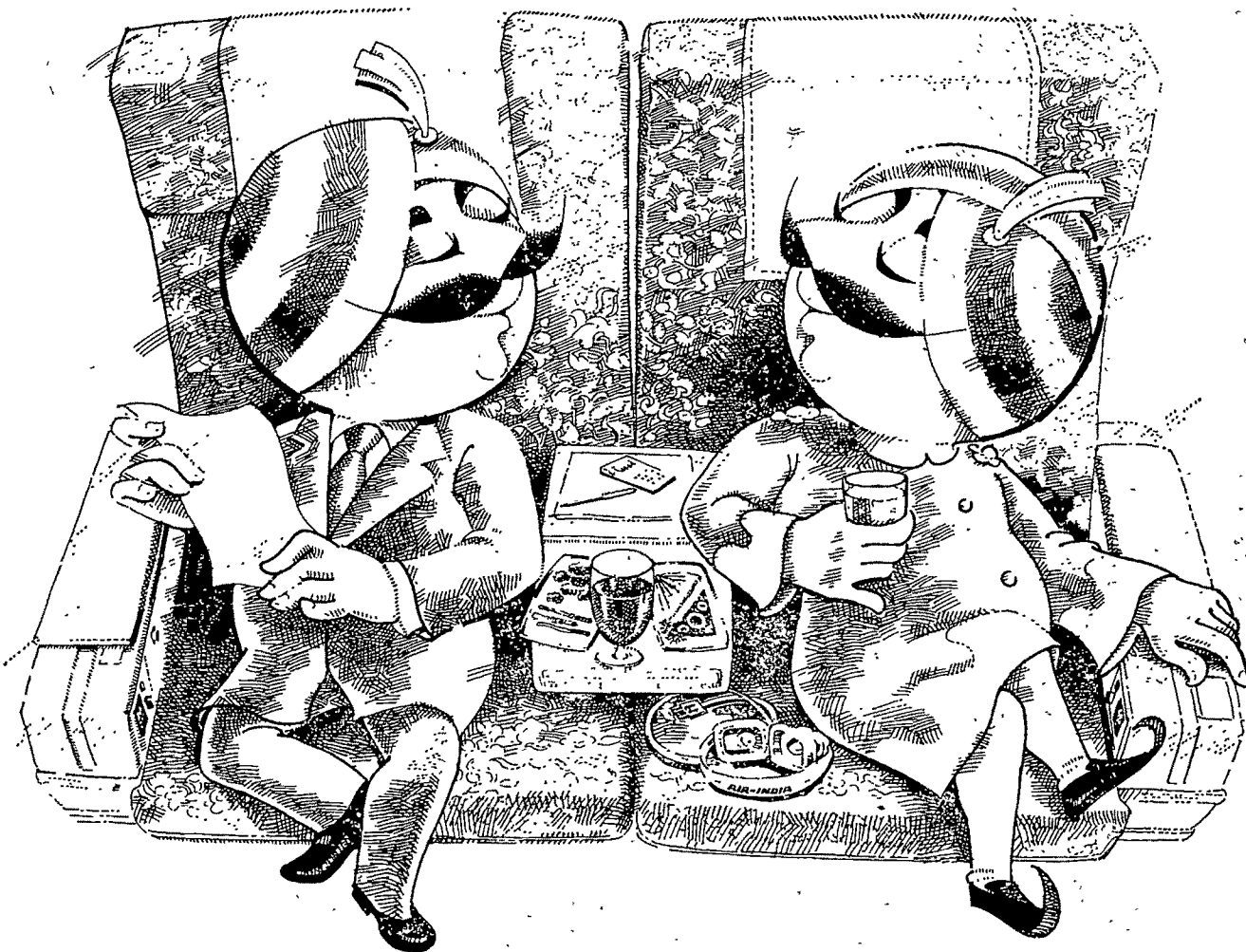
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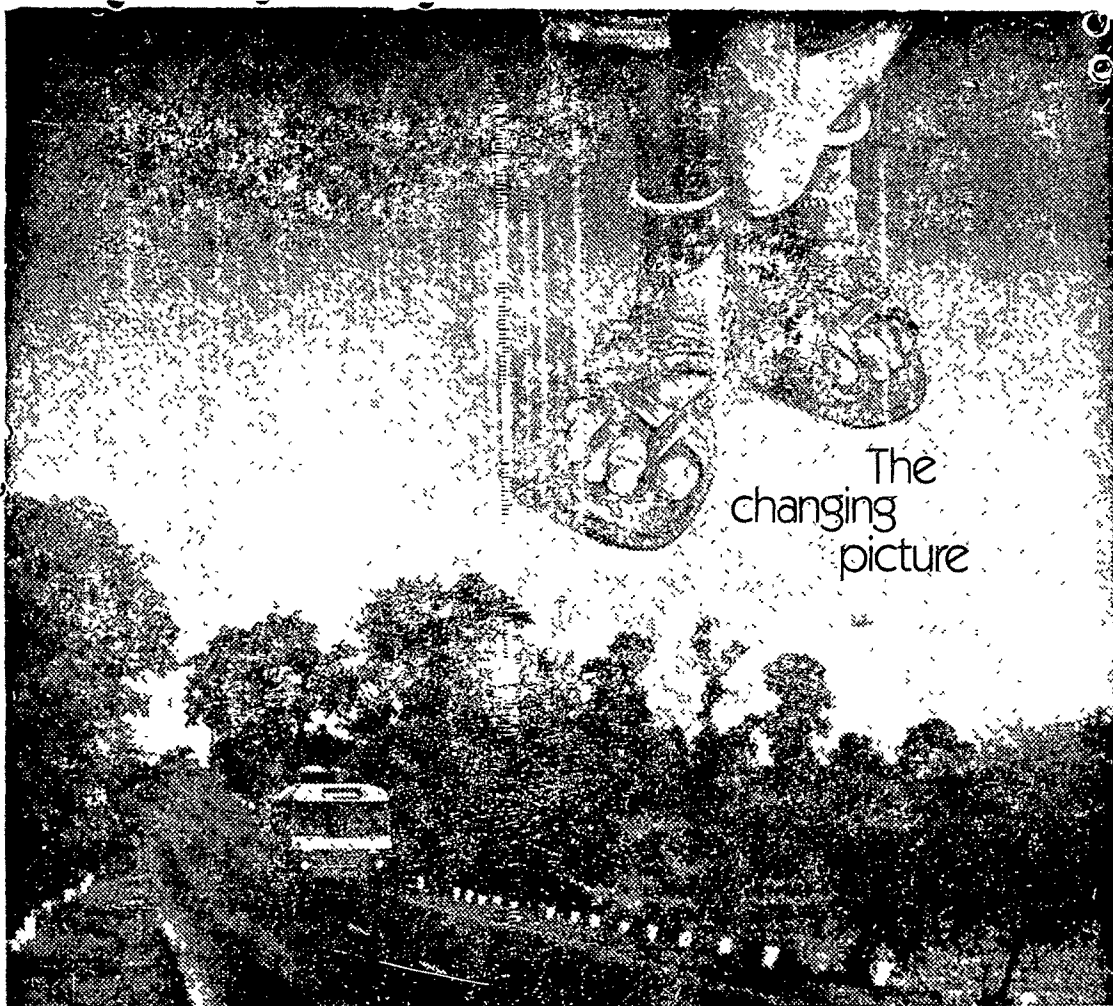
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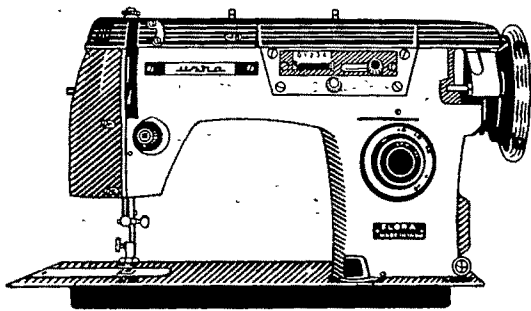
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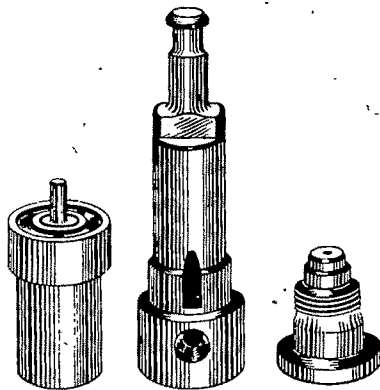
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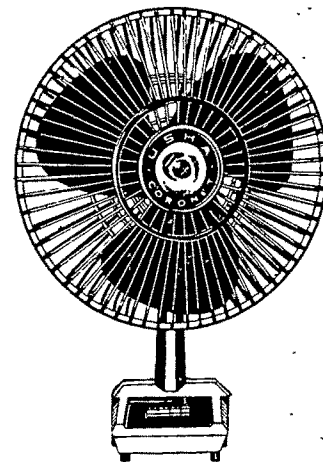
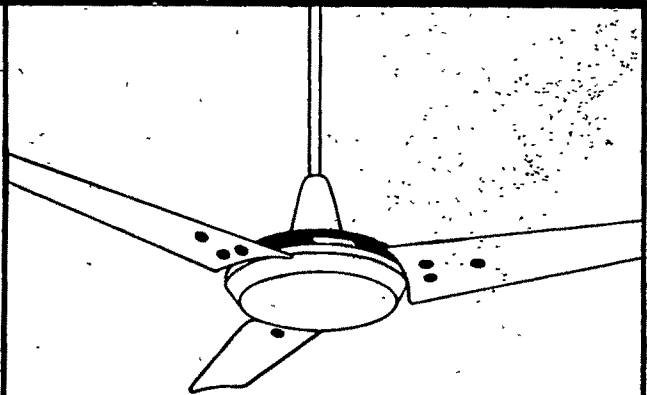
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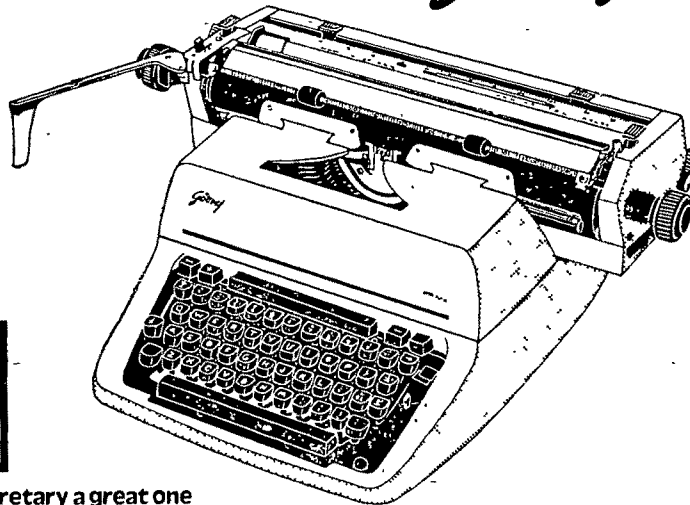


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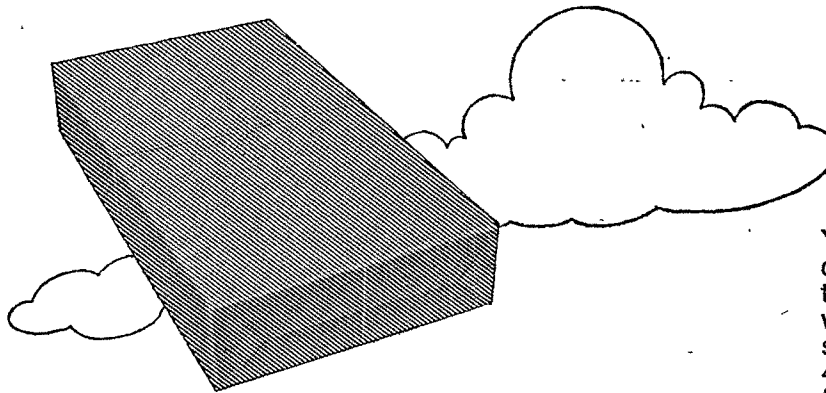


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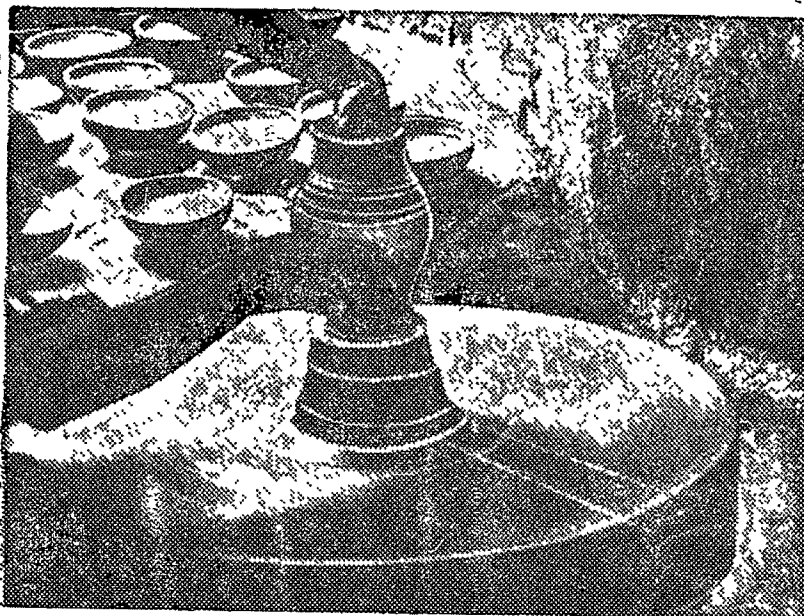
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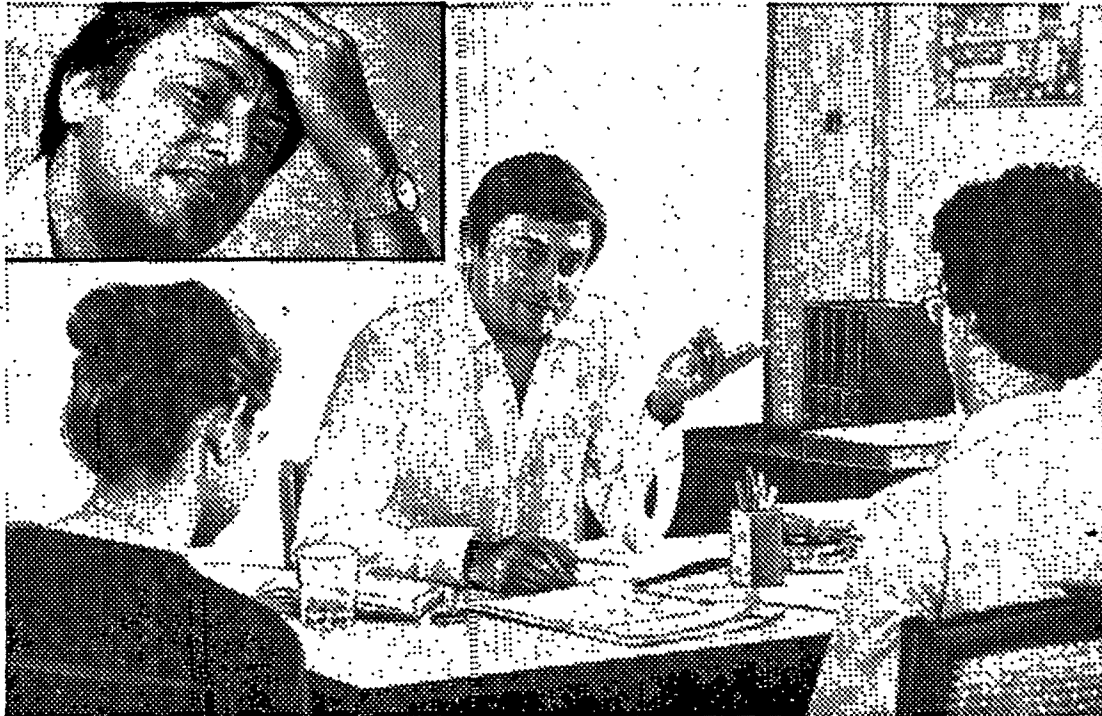
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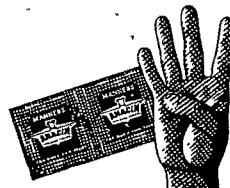
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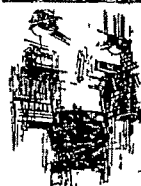
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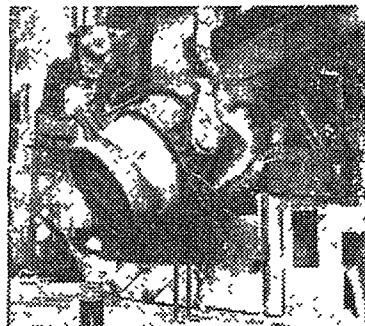
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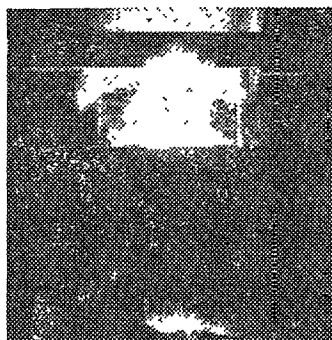
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Superalloys Plant (Midhani), Hyderabad: Plant, general view



Sponge Iron Plant, Kothagudem: Direct reduction unit with waste gas cleaning facility

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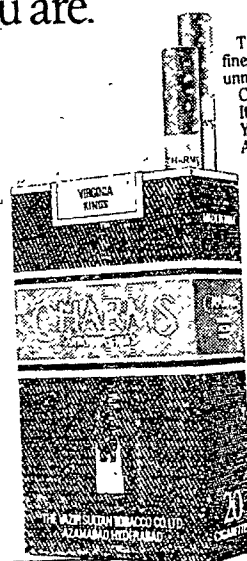
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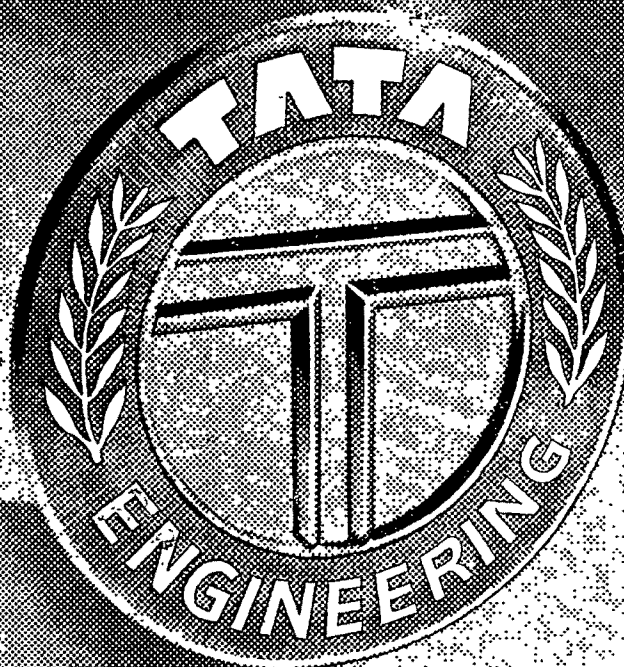
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NEXT MONTH : STATE OF THE NATION

306

BEHIND THE BALLOT

a symposium
on the eighth
general elections

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

Posed by Rajni Kothari, political scientist,
President of the People's Union of Civil Liberties, Delhi

THE WAVE

H.K. Paranjape, economist and
writer on public affairs, Pune

THE STATE GOES MACHO

H. Khare, Assistant Editor,
'The Hindustan Times', Delhi

STAR CHARISMA

Rajni Bakshi, a free lance journalist

THE REGIONAL FACTOR

G.S. Bhargava, Resident Editor,
'Indian Express', Hyderabad

THE WOMAN VOTER

Madhu Kishwar, Editor, 'Manushi', Delhi

BOOKS

Reviewed by R.K. Srivastava, D. Cherian, R. Raghavan,
and A. Prasad

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography
compiled by M.P. Nayar

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury
of Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

WE are in for a major reassessment of where we stand and how we proceed. For, the assassination, its bloody aftermath and an election held under a climate of deep anxiety have together produced a dramatic end of an era — the era dominated by a confrontation between Indira Gandhi and the national opposition parties. With the sudden death of the former and of the national power centre that she had put together and the virtual death of the centre parties that constituted the national opposition, we may be in for a major transition to possibly a new political order.

Whether this will be dominated by passion and violence let loose before and during the election, or by a political system based on consensus and a genuine national reconciliation, will depend on how the new elites — both ruling and oppositional — read the challenges thrown up by the turbulent two months following October 31, 1984.

We shall return to the larger issues after reviewing the election results and drawing implications thereof. Even here, though, we need to probe. We need to look at not just gross figures, impressive as they are, as at the emerging pattern; not just the fact of a wave as the content thereof; not just the size of the turnout as the changed reason for it (unlike in 1977 and 1967 before it). We need to probe the dramatic change in the north-south balance of Congress support with a clean sweep of the northern heartland, gains in the deep south and losses in the near south. The complete rout of the national opposition and a simultaneous vindication of the regional parties. How when a rhetoric of all-out confrontation replaced that of competition according to the rules of the game, it got such wide acceptance. Why a tired voter who was losing faith in all parties rallied behind a vague promise held out by a non-descript leader.

We may begin by pointing to the simple logic of Indian electoral behaviour over the last several elections (since 1971): a 'wave' each time, based on anxiety, mobilized through a new expectation, producing a large majority without necessarily promising either stability or legitimacy. It was the same this time, only the 'wave' was bigger in extent given the

depth of anxiety and anomie generated before and during the election.

The mere fact of a wave, however, is not enough. One needs to explain it. Three main factors account for it this time.

First, there was a total discrediting of the national opposition. Wherever one went, one found voters shaking their heads in utter despair and disgust at the opposition. Long standing citadels of opposition parties — of DMKP in U.P., BJP in M.P., Janata in Karnataka and Orissa, CPI in Bihar — crumbled. Tragedies like the communal carnage in Delhi and the disaster in Bhopal had no impact.

Individuals and social groups who were no supporters of the ruling party and agreed that these were very serious issues, or that the Congress(I) had failed miserably in reducing poverty and destitution, were however unwilling to back *this* opposition. The endless 'unity' talks, each time resulting in a greater show of disunity, pettiness, mindless squabbles and ego rides, pushed all but the most committed to a point of disgust. The memory of 1977-79 was still ripe. To that was added the wailing drama of aged manipulators who refused to read the writing on the wall. More important than the 'sympathy wave' for Indira Gandhi or a positive wave for Rajiv Gandhi was the negative wave against the national opposition. This was the first election where the negative vote turned not against the government but against the opposition.

Such a negative wave against the opposition also explains why the notion of having a single candidate against the Congress (around which the whole unity drama was enacted) is a misconception. It did not help much in Delhi, Gujarat, most of Maharashtra and Rajasthan where adjustments had taken place, even in Karnataka. Once the national opposition is discredited at the national level, it does not matter whether there is one candidate or many. The important thing is the overall image, not the mechanics of seat adjustment.

The second major factor underlying the wave was undoubtedly the big communal backlash of the Hindu voter. While everyone seems to sense this in one way or another, it is necessary to see how this

happened and how it represents a basic reversal of India's political culture (as also of the core of Hindu identity). A long period of plural, segmented existence was leading to a slow sense of uneasiness with mainstream politics, to a sense of being cheated, a feeling that the very spirit of accommodation and tolerance on which the Hindus pride themselves was being misused, that the 'minorities' — from Muslims and Sikhs to dalits and adivasis — were being pampered. They had the reservations, they owned the arms, they got the benefits of State patronage, and here were we, the so-called majority, left high and dry.

The slow growth of fundamentalist and revivalist thought spurred by extremist elements, which was in fact a reaction to Indira Gandhi's populist coalition consisting of the religious minorities, the large variety of deprived and marginalised groups (among them the scheduled castes and tribes) and the south, was brilliantly politicized by her following her party's virtual rout in the south and growing evidence that her party was losing support among the Muslims.

With this started a complete reversal of strategy under Mrs. Gandhi's amoral and desperate leadership — towards the north and the Hindu heartland, building upon the confrontations in Punjab, Sikkim and Jammu and Kashmir, and indirectly against Pakistan and the 'foreign hand'; in all giving to the Hindu a big boost and a firm stake in the Congress(I). Rajiv Gandhi's election built on the same themes, if anything stated more crudely and simply than his mother ever did.

With this the whole arithmetic changed. The heartland of the north, which had never voted heavily for the Congress, changed stance overnight. The BJP (which, from its Jana Sangh days, had espoused the same line) was fully routed; the only 2 seats it got were outside the Hindu heartland; its *raison d'être* had collapsed. The same was the case with Charan Singh and his DMKP. For, with the rise of religious identity, the caste factor receded in the background. As for the Janata, after the exit of the BJP, Charan Singh and his allies in U.P. and Haryana, and both the Karpoori Thakur and the S.N. Sinha factions in Bihar, there was anyway

nothing left except in Karnataka where it didn't do as badly as it appears at first sight.

It needs to be stated that the communal vote for the Congress(I) is less a result of the alienation of minorities from it as one of assertion of the Hindu, responding to the call for unifying the disparate groupings and identities, for homogenization, for a strong India — a strong Hindu India.

Thirdly, there was the highly charged and emotionally unnerving issue in this election; that of the threat to India's unity. This seems to have had a tremendous impact. The message was loud and clear: that the Indian nation State was in danger, that the Congress(I) alone was the only legitimate party, every other party was illegitimate. This was a big coup by a party that had brought the country to the brink of disintegration but successfully sold the line that the opposition was responsible for it. And let us not forget the critical role of violence perpetrated by the State and its agents on innocent people — in Punjab, then in Delhi — in establishing the dominion of the majority community and raising the desperate banner of threats to unity. It was under this intimidating environment that the nation was taken for a ride — which we politely call a 'wave'.

All of this was reflected in the 'wave' in favour of Rajiv Gandhi; the rest was rationalization. For, Rajiv's message to the electorate was not just of 'Mr. Clean', etc., but of a shrewd combination of that image with a rhetoric of confrontation, and of a nation in peril. His election rhetoric had it all: the opposition was illegitimate, we can do without one, there were serious threats from Pakistan and China, and from the more abstract 'foreign hand', all seen as one major conspiracy. It is this combination that made Rajiv the darling of both the communalists and the progressives.

That brings us to another important and contrary feature of this election. While there was a *primary* wave of the kind described above, there was also a major *secondary* wave, not as spread out and dramatic but no less strong and basic. The Congress(I) made inroads everywhere but it was held at bay in certain places. And nearly all of these happened to be ones

with a strong regional party or one where a national party had taken on a regional role. This happened in Andhra Pradesh, in the Kashmir Valley, in West Bengal (though not as strong a sweep), in Tripura, even in Sikkim.

In Karnataka the discrediting of the national Janata combined with the more credible and regionalized image of Hegde's Janata Party produced an ambivalent response: a considerable increase in the vote compared to 1980; a very small improvement in seats. The despair of the voter with the opposition did not extend to the regional parties. Indeed, it was the opposite: the humiliation of Farooq Abdullah and N.T. Rama Rao discredited the Congress(I) in these regions. The same with Bhandari in Sikkim and Chakravorty in Tripura.

There was a perceptible 'sympathy vote' for Indira Gandhi in the south where there was no great Hindu communal upsurge. Through her death Mrs. Gandhi seems to have recaptured parts of the south for her party and her son. Culturally, the south is made differently. Both the traditional cultural syndromes there and the celluloid culture of recent decades emphasize simple, folk conceptions of life, seen in black and white terms, underlining virtue and greatness in heroes (like MGR and NTR) and saviours (like Indira Gandhi).

The assassination of Mrs. Gandhi came as a great shock, brought back the virtues of their 'Indira Amma', forgetting for the moment their rejection of the Congress (I). This happened all over the south, particularly in Tamilnadu (where of course the sympathy wave for MGR added to that for Indira Gandhi), Karnataka and Kerala, but also in parts of Andhra Pradesh. With all this, however, the regional factor prevailed not just in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka but also in Tamilnadu where the hold of the Dravida parties continues, and in Kerala where the role of local caste and communal politics there (whose appeal has perceptibly grown under Karunakaran) continues to be strong. The Congress realized this and went out of its way to accommodate these local parties.

This growing influence of the regional parties and of the regional pull on parties like the CPI (M)—wiped out in Kerala, now basically a West Bengal/Tripura party—and Janata—wiped out everywhere except in Karnataka—points to a different configuration of party alignments than is represented by the communal sweep of the Congress (I). The latter's geographic base has narrowed. It is weak in large parts of the south, in West Bengal, Tripura and Sikkim, in Kashmir, and in a very different way in Assam and Punjab and the whole of the North-east (where it may well win the elections but this does not ensure legitimacy). This makes of it a party of the heartland, of *Fortress India*, withdrawing from all peripheries, big and small, and consolidating in the middle. Seen in this way, the 'wave' of 1984 is of limited value in ensuring unity and stability in the country.

Politically, a different lesson is to be learnt. If one is to build India's democratic foundation on its pluralist and federalist basis, the idea of alignment of regional and local forces, strengthened by a large array of micro movements and voluntaristic responses to an increasingly insensitive and repressive State, will gain ground as the democratic process gets further mobilized. But for this to take place and for the regional and local forces to play a creative *macro* role, one crucial pre-requisite must be met: the need to defeat the communal backlash that has been let loose of late. In the absence of a strategy to that effect, the regional and grassroots forces will be wiped out just as the national opposition has been wiped out.

Whether such a total elimination of all sources of opposition and dissent will benefit the Congress (I) or some more obscurantist force will depend on how sensitive the new ruling group at the Centre will be. It has two options before it. One is to pursue the logic of centralized politics to its bitter end and steamroll over not just the religious and ethnic minorities but also over the whole federal process, undermining regional aspirations. The other is to really open up the federal process, take the Sarkaria Commission seriously, listen to the voices from the States and from levels below the State, including the Rajamannar Committee Report, the Anandpur Sahib resolution and the submissions by the CPI (M) and the National Conference, as well as various independent proposals for economic and political decentralization, and move towards a genuinely functioning democratic polity.

The 'wave' for Rajiv Gandhi is thus based on very contradictory pulls: communal backlash in the north mixed with regional upsurges elsewhere, a tribute to his mother mixed with a desire to grow out of her authoritarian sweep, a mandate for consolidating centralized rule versus an opportunity to rebuild democratic institutions.

Underlying these is a more basic contradiction. The 1984 election has been acclaimed by many to be a vote 'for unity'. In fact, it underscored two conceptions of unity, one projected by the primary wave and another by the secondary wave as laid out above. The first is a conception of unity based on an authoritarian Centre, culturally homogenizing (both of the majority community and of Indian society at large), ruthlessly steamrolling all diversities, whether regional, ethnic and religious, or political. The second is a conception of unity based on recognition of the plural nature of Indian society, respect for diversities and interest in weaving together such a pattern through a federal and decentralized structure of the State.

Much depends on which of these two conceptions finally win out. It is on to such a basic choice that the 1984 election has ushered the Indian nation. The choice will depend partly on the new power group at the Centre but largely on the people of India.

RAJNI KOTHARI

The wave

H. K. PARANJAPÉ

'To see and hear a Prince, he should seem to be all mercy, faith, integrity, humanity and religion. And nothing is more necessary than to seem to have this last quality, for men in general judge more by the eyes than by the hands, for every one can see, but very few have to feel. Let a prince therefore aim at conquering and maintaining the State, and the means will always be judged honourable and praised by everyone, for the vulgar is always taken by appearances and the issue of the moment; and the world consists only of the vulgar, and the few who are not vulgar are isolated when the many have a rallying point in the prince.'

Machiavelli: *'The Prince'*

THE massive and unprecedented victory of Rajiv Gandhi and his party surprised, almost shocked, not only his opponents but even most non-partisan observers of the political scene. The most optimistic estimates of the number of seats likely to be won was 366, even though the possibility of a further accretion had been mentioned. As has now been repeatedly said, even at the height of Jawaharlal Nehru's popularity, the ruling party never attained such success.

The Congress(I) by itself getting over 400 seats has created almost an euphoria among commentators. There is much talk of a 'people's verdict' which has banished casteism and regionalism, about a young generation taking over with massive support from the people, a vote in favour of the 'ideology' of the Congress Party, and one for supporting the unity and integrity of the country which were the main themes of Rajiv Gandhi's poll speeches. Is this how the election results should be interpreted?

It is necessary to be cautious and not be overwhelmed by the unexpectedly massive victory of the ruling party. There is no doubt that the victory is unprecedented in its magnitude; but it should not be overlooked that in the representational system which we have adopted — of the first past the post being the only

winner — even a comparatively small swing in votes can bring about a massive swing in the number of seats won. In view of the kind of comments circulating in the country, it is necessary to reiterate that securing 80 per cent of the seats does not mean having secured 80 per cent of the votes. The swing in votes was certainly a large one; and the Congress Party obtained just over 49 per cent of the votes in the seats for which it entered the contest. It had never had such a majority before. But it should not be overlooked that the swing in the vote required for a massive impact on the number of seats does not have to be more than 7 per cent or 8 per cent.

What is really remarkable, and needs to be analysed and understood, is the phenomenon that not only was there a significant increase in the proportion of votes cast but that this increase in voting appears to have favoured the ruling party and not the opposition.

The Congress Party obtained over 50 per cent vote in ten States and Delhi, over 67 per cent in Himachal to over 51 per cent in Maharashtra and Karnataka. In U.P. it polled over 51 per cent. Even in West Bengal it got 48 per cent, only a little less than was obtained by the Left Front. While the Congress(I) vote in Andhra was as low as 42 per cent, this was an increase of almost 10 per cent from the proportion of votes obtained by it in the State elections in 1983.

This swing is thus massive indeed. It is to be seen not only in the north but also in the south (except for Andhra) and in the east. It was not only in the rural areas but also in most of the urban areas. Bombay City, boasting of politically the most conscious urban population in the country, voted massively in favour of the ruling party except in one constituency where industrial labour stood fast behind the militant fighter, Datta Samant. Not only Calcutta

but even its semi-urban environs have given a clear mandate to the Congress(I), showing that the ruling Left Front had lost the confidence of a substantial number of middle class and working class elements in that city.

It is necessary first to try to understand what lies behind this swing. This is undoubtedly a complex problem, because there is little detailed data as yet available to make it possible to study the trends in the voting behaviour of people. Moreover, even though the overall result in most parts of the country was similar, it would be hazardous, and probably wrong, to think that the factors responsible for that result were the same and had the same degree of influence in different parts of the country.

For example, how much impact was made by what has been discussed for the last few months as the possible growth of a 'Hindu backlash'? There is no doubt that, especially in the north and in the States surrounding the Punjab, the effect of 'Operation Bluestar', and of Indira Gandhi's assassination, was to swing a very large part of the Hindu vote even more pronouncedly in favour of the Congress(I). By her policy regarding the Akalis, Mrs. Gandhi proved herself to be a guardian of Hindu interests, far more than the Bharatiya Janata Party, until then thought to be the party representing Hindu communalism.

One does not know whether the impact of the policy adopted during the Delhi and Jammu elections last year did not convey a clear message to Indira Gandhi, that even the traditional BJP vote would swing towards the Congress if the confrontationalist policy with the Akalis continued.

The fact that the BJP was cautious in its criticism of the Akalis, that even Charan Singh was not always ready to denounce them and that the Janata leaders were almost insistent on bringing about a compromise, was apparently held by a substantial group among Hindus in these States as a mark against them.

It cannot be forgotten that Rajiv Gandhi made the Anandpur Sahib

Resolution a major plank of his election propaganda, took the line that there could be no compromise with the Akalis if they held by that resolution and accused opposition parties of lack of patriotism because of their attitude of compromise with the Akalis. The peculiar way in which Balasaheb Devras made a statement about the Hindu vote going to those who would guard Hindu interests, and Nanaji Deshmukh openly coming out in support of Rajiv Gandhi, were clear pointers that what might have been traditionally considered as the group supporting the BJP might not continue to do so, but would support Congress(I); and this is apparently what happened.

One does not know whether this may not have the impact at some stage of the BJP leadership drawing the lesson that its attempts to shift from a Hindu communal to a more secular approach to politics has cost it heavily; and that it was time to go back to the original stance of guarding the interests of the Hindu nation.

One expectation was that the anti-Sikh stand taken by the Congress(I) would lead to a significant shrinkage of the minority vote which that party used to enjoy. It was thought that the riots in Bhiwandi and Bombay would have alienated the Muslim vote, and the Sikh vote would certainly go against that party. Many people even thought that the Harijans might have begun to realise that, in spite of promises of improving their lot, nothing much had happened.

Moreover, with the Imam of Jama Masjid advising Muslims to vote against the ruling party, the SGPC and the Akali Dal announcing support to the Janata, and with the background of the Delhi atrocities against Sikhs at the beginning of November, it was thought that these communities would largely support the opposition. It was also expected that Farooq Abdullah's campaign on behalf of the opposition in areas predominated by Muslims would help the opposition.

None of these expectations materialised. Regarding the Harijans, it appears that they did not have much choice. It was unlikely that they

would support a party dominated by the upper castes and traders like the BJP, or a party dominated by dominant peasant castes like the DMKP. The Janata had never been able to project a clear image about itself.

But, it should also be noted that the system of boothwise counting recently introduced also created a fear in the minds of minority groups, which are largely concentrated in particular localities, that their vote against the ruling party would be known, and that they would suffer for it. One has to realise that, for a large proportion of unsophisticated and illiterate voters from these communities, some suspicion is bound to linger about the secrecy of the ballot itself.

Moreover, the implications of boothwise counting were apparently impressed upon the minds of their leaders by the workers of the ruling party. There are specific reports from Delhi that the same workers who organised Sikh-bashing early in November gave threats to the leaders of the minority predominated localities that their position might not be secure after the elections if they were found having voted against the ruling party.

With an almost universal expectation that the Congress(I) was going to return to power, it would have been surprising if the minority communities did not decide that discretion was better and that they should cast their votes in favour of the ruling party. Otherwise, the Congress(I) getting so much support in predominantly Muslim and Sikh areas cannot be understood. The revolt by Antulay would certainly have cost the Congress(I) much more of the Muslim vote but for this factor.

Even in the Poona City constituency, it was observed that, in the localities of Muslim and Sikh concentrations, not only the BJP but even the Janata candidates polled very poorly. At the same time, in some of the northern areas the fact that the SGPC and Akali leaderships had announced their support to the Janata appears to have alienated whatever Hindu vote that party would have otherwise secured.

But, it must be admitted that all this is inadequate in explaining the very large swing — unprecedented in magnitude — in favour of the Congress(I), and which was to be found practically all over the country. In Karnataka, in spite of the supposed popularity of Ramakrishna Hegde, the Congress vote was over 51 per cent. Even in West Bengal, it was only a little less than that of the Left Front. In Andhra, between 1983 and 1984, there was a swing of about 10 per cent in the vote polled by the Congress. This cannot be explained only in terms of the above mentioned factors; and certainly not by factors like booth capturing, rigging, and the use of money power as has been alleged by some of the opposition parties. In these last respects, there is no evidence to suggest that there was any significant addition to the operation of these factors in 1984 as compared to the earlier elections.

One way of understanding what happened is to see where the opposition secured a larger vote, and why. The case of Andhra Pradesh is very clear. N.T. Rama Rao continued to be looked upon by a substantial proportion of Telugu people as the hero and saviour of Telugu Desam. His image continued to score over those of Indira-amma as a martyr and of Rajiv as the rising star of Delhi. Perhaps people had not quite forgotten that it was Rajiv who had insulted the Telugu people represented by T. Anjiah, their Chief Minister at that time.

There was also sympathy for NTR for the way in which he was attacked by the Centre, and also affection for him for the way he fought the onslaught in spite of having just recovered from heart-surgery, and made the powerful Centre back-track. Farooq Abdullah's image held, partly because of his father, and partly because the Centre dethroned him by methods which were obviously disliked by the people in the valley.

Let us look at Maharashtra. Unlike what even the Chief Minister of Maharashtra was expecting, the Congress(I) obtained 43 out of 47 seats. Even a veteran like Madhu Dandavate, whose constituency has been voting for the socialist group

for over 20 years, won by only a small margin; and even this would have been difficult if there was no candidate from Antulay's group who took away some votes of the Congress(I).

The only person whose victory was massive was Sharad Pawar, acknowledged by many as the upcoming leader of Maharashtra. Y.B. Chavan's death to some extent helped Pawar further as he was known as the political heir of Chavan. Having been in positions of power and finally having worked as Chief Minister, also meant that people remembered his concrete achievements in the past. His constituency had the industrial belt of Pimpri-Chinchwad in it, and this would also have helped the margin that he built up. Sharad Pawar's win was a convincing one, as he scored in all the segments of his constituency; and this in spite of Rajiv Gandhi having addressed a special meeting there just a day before the election.

Datta Samant got elected from the constituency which has a large proportion of workers; and here, unlike in the rural areas, the women workers as well as workers' families had suffered a great deal in the textile strike. The workers knew that the government and the ruling party had let them down; and they believed that Datta Samant had fought for them and stood by them. That is probably the reason why that constituency stood like a rock in the wave that otherwise swept through Bombay and captured all the seats for the Congress(I).

Vidarbha was thought to be a fortress for the Congress (I). But the *Shetkari Sanghatana* of Sharad Joshi made its presence felt in certain constituencies there, and also in a few in middle Maharashtra. While this did not show any impact in terms of seats, the impact could be seen by the very small margins by which Congress (I) candidates won in the areas where the *Shetkari Sanghatana* had built up its strength.

Thus, what is indicated is that, except where there was a genuine feeling among the people strongly favouring a particular candidate or

regarding particular issues, the Congress (I) wave swept all before it. It is true that, in Maharashtra, opposition unity was not achieved in spite of Sharad Pawar's influence and efforts. But, even where there was a single opposition candidate, it made little difference to not only the victory of the Congress (I) candidate but even to the margin with which he won. Candidates like Anup Shah or Sharad Dighe, hardly having any significant influence or even sufficiently known in all the segments of their constituencies, won by large margins. A veteran and well-known activist like Pramila Dandavate even lost her deposit.

It was thought that, unlike in the past, the Harijans would not vote for the Congress this time. The agitation regarding the change in the name of the Marathwada University, and the anti-Harijan riots which took place as a result, would have alienated Harijans from the ruling party, it was thought. To some extent, it is true that the Harijan vote went in support of the candidates of the different factions of the Republican Party. But, in most cases, the Harijans had little choice as they felt that the candidates belonging to the Congress (I) as well as the opposition were unlikely genuinely to do anything to protect the interest of the Harijans. And they certainly continued to think that, like Indira Gandhi in the past, her son would be a better protector of Harijans than any of the local leaders.

It can be said that, in most constituencies, the individual candidates and their qualities—or lack of them—made little difference. The Congress (I) victory has therefore mainly to be ascribed to the shock created by the assassination of Indira Gandhi and then to the impact that Rajiv Gandhi himself and the propaganda made on his behalf, had on the mass of voters.

In retrospect, it is clear that, while in sophisticated circles, the almost continuous show of the lying-in-state of Indira Gandhi's body for three days, and then the detailed presentation of the cremation ceremony, was thought to be

both boring and inappropriate, it obviously had a powerful impact on the common people. After all, even our cinema producers know that Indian audiences are much swayed by death scenes, and that is also the occasion when the fortitude of the hero in facing the death of his dear ones makes a deep impression.

With the TV camera focussed on Rajiv most of the time, his personality made an enormous impact.

The studied elegance of Rajiv Gandhi's dress, his handsome looks and quiet manner had a powerful effect even on sophisticated people, and obviously far more on unsophisticated ones.

It is significant that for the first time one gets reports from various parts of Maharashtra that, even where men voted for the opposition candidates, the women voted for Congress (I). It was a vote for Rajiv Gandhi as such, also to the son of his mother, but probably it had little to do with the Congress (I) as a party.

There were other factors which continued to operate in this election as they had always operated in favour of the party ruling at Delhi. Except for an odd candidate like Sharad Pawar, few among the opposition candidates have been in prominent positions of power, long enough to have had the image of being capable rulers. A kind of feudal feeling of reverence for those in power continues even in richer countries with more educated populations.

When the ruler also has a certain patrician look about him — and this was so with Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, and is so now with Rajiv Gandhi — it helps considerably with the electorate. Thus the TV image as well as the real-life spectacle of the Prince from Delhi is of great importance. In fact, as TV spreads, this will make an even greater impact in elections; and if the medium continues to be dominated by those who are in power at Delhi as it was in the recent elections, it cannot but have a powerful effect on voting behaviour. The only personalities who can compete with

such a TV image have been those who already had a powerful cinematic image like M.G. Ramachandran or N.T. Rama Rao.

It must also be stated that not many opposition leaders cared to utilise even the little opportunity they got on the TV for the greatest possible effect. It was evident that little effort had been made by them to get professional advice so as to make the best possible use of their TV or radio appearance. The opposition leaders will have to realise that they cannot afford to remain non-professional and unconcerned in such matters.

In addition to the TV image, or where TV could not reach, the helicopter arrival of the Prince from Delhi with considerably official fanfare — including the elaborate police arrangements and the commando guards specially deployed for his security — could not but make a powerful impact. Here was a real ruler — and he looked a young Prince all right — who came to seek votes. How could loyal subjects refuse to do his bidding?

It should also be remembered that there have been few occasions even in the past when the common people in Maharashtra, for example, have voted against those who were in power; and when there have been electoral revolts, these were due to very powerful motives which also proved to be quite short-lived. One occasion was the agitation for a united Maharashtra in 1956. With a number of persons having died especially in Bombay city as a result of police firings, and the feeling that Delhi was treating Maharashtra unjustly, the ruling party suffered serious reverses in the 1956 elections. But once the ruling Congress realised the impact that this demand was having and retraced its steps — once the demand was granted — the electorate swung back to the ruling Congress and the veterans who fought for the Maharashtra State were mostly defeated.

Even elsewhere, the anti-Congress wave has been motivated by some very powerful factors all of which have been short-lived. Many of us thought even in 1977 that the large

scale swing away from the ruling Congress in that election was due, not so much to the Emergency, the censorship and the detention of political workers, as to the sterilization campaign and the scare that it caused among common people. That probably had the most powerful impact in creating the swing against the Congress. As soon as that feeling had gone, it was clear that the anti-Congress vote was declining when elections to State legislatures were held later.

It should also be noted that the resources that the ruling party could bring to bear on spreading its message were so massive that the opposition campaign was bound to fall flat on its face. In terms of posters, tapes, video shows, newspaper publicity etc., the expenditure incurred by the ruling party in the 1984 elections must have been in terms of multiples of the expenditure incurred by all the other parties put together. Then, again, there was almost a ruthless attempt to play on people's emotions by displaying posters depicting Indira Gandhi's assassination.

It is also quite clear that, whatever the feeling among the educated and sophisticated people, there is no antipathy to dynastic succession among the common people. If nothing else, the recent election should make that clear. The continuance of the feudal approach is powerfully suggested by the enthusiastic acceptance by the mass of Indian voters of Rajiv succeeding Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister. Charan Singh in his campaign tried to emphasise the point that neither Rajiv nor his mother could distinguish a wheat stalk from a rice stalk but probably most people did not think that there was any necessity for the Ruler to have such understanding of what was well known to every common voter!

Similarly, it is quite obvious that issues like the misuse of power, the spread of corruption throughout the governmental hierarchy and the indifference to sorting out peoples' difficulties whether they were in the form of persistent shortage of small change or difficulties in facilities

like public transport make little impact on the voting behaviour of the electorate. The interruption in democratic local self-government about which many of us feel so much appears to have no effect on the voter.

Bombay voted largely for Congress(I), and its citizens appear not to have resented the for-the-first-time interruption of elected Municipal Government in Bombay city in over a hundred years' history. One of the points that the opinion poll conducted by *India Today* had brought out was that, for the country as a whole, regional autonomy was thought to be the chief issue only by some 5 per cent of the voters. Even corruption was thought to be such only by 18 per cent. As many as 47 per cent of voters thought of national unity as the chief issue, and this was before Rajiv Gandhi's campaign which focussed on this theme.

Instead of being on the defensive, and having to answer charges for widespread corruption for which so much material had been provided by investigators like Arun Shourie over the last few years, or even about national unity in view of the bleak record of Indira Gandhi and her government in the North-East as well as in the North-West, Rajiv Gandhi succeeded in taking the offensive, persisting in propagating that national unity was endangered by external forces as well as internal forces, and that the opposition was either too blind to understand it or even ready to join hands with the enemies of the country. In fact, his propaganda almost questioned the patriotism of opposition veterans! The relevant point is that he was able to keep the initiative to himself, and the opposition leadership had merely to respond all the time to the criticism made by him.

What is also clear is that a few uncomplicated ideas can catch the voters' imagination if they are put across properly far better than various complicated issues. The ruling Congress has always been able to use a good slogan effectively; it was *Garibi Hatao* in 1971, the *Government that Works* in 1980,

and *Unity and Integrity of the country* in 1984. It is also obvious that, while the ruling party had enormous advantages, it used the advantages with a great deal of professional *finesse*.

It must also be admitted that, as the elections shortly followed the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the opposition was at a disadvantage. If Indira Gandhi had been alive, they could have mounted an attack on her corruption, misuse of power and other failures. But such a campaign about Indira Gandhi's record was probably considered not only inappropriate but even inopportune by the opposition. They must have thought that this would be counter-productive. Rajiv Gandhi was new, so all that could be said was that he had no experience. But that was obviously not considered an inadequacy by many voters.

And there was the question of the alternative which the voter was being offered. Could it be said that the record of the opposition parties and leadership regarding corruption was an un-sullied one? Excepting Madhu Dandavate or Ramakrishna Hegde as odd individuals, could it be said that the record of the Janata or the BJP leaders in power was such that no corruption charges could be levelled against them? They might not have been able to collect as much black money as the Congress(I) did; but how were their campaigns being conducted except through some use of black money?

In the three years when they were in power, what did the opposition do to make corruption in politics more difficult? It was not at all as if the opposition record whether in terms of honesty and integrity, or in terms of political and administrative capability, was obviously different from and superior to that of the Congress(I).

When it came to ideology, the programme and the image about what they would do when and if in power, could one say that there was a clear difference between the Congress(I) on the one side, and the BJP, Janata and the Congress(S) on the other? All these parties — like the Janata between 1977 and 1979 —

were attempting to build a kind of political front, combining left, centre and right elements in order to consolidate sufficient political support. Why should an untried Front be preferred to a Front which had worked a government and showed itself capable of continuing as one party, and governing the country over a period of time?

Where an alternative party posed a clear alternative such as the CPM in West Bengal and Tripura, and N.T. Rama Rao's Telugu Desam in Andhra, the voter could recognise a difference. But otherwise, it was like choosing between tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee.

One obvious lesson of all of this is that defeating a ruling party in an all-India election is going to be quite a difficult proposition. Unless the ruling party bungles badly as it did in its sterilization campaign in the Emergency, it is unlikely that the swing against it could ever be so widespread as to give the opposition a majority. The advantages of being a ruling party are self-perpetuating, especially in a country like India where the State cannot but have the initiative and enjoy the power to help the economic and social transformation of the country. Such State initiative cannot but give the ruling party an advantage over its opponents in terms of gaining popularity, and therefore maintaining success at the polls.

It is however possible that, in particular areas and regions, enough feeling against the existing rulers could be developed. This happened in Maharashtra in 1956, in Tamilnadu in the 60s, and in Andhra in 1983. If such a feeling could combine with the emergence of a charismatic personality with a hold over the common voter in the region — as was the case with M.G. Ramachandran and N.T. Rama Rao — then there is a good chance of an opposition victory in particular States.

It must be remembered however that to create such a regional feeling which also has to be pointedly anti-Centre, requires not only a propitious atmosphere but also a degree of ruthlessness in supporting

anti-Centre feelings which not many opposition parties are ready to adopt. It was only the almost secessionist background of the DMK which created the wave against the Congress in Tamilnadu. The Telugu anger against the Centre's mal-treatment of Andhra was already there; it only required to be consolidated by a charismatic leader like N.T. Rama Rao. The CPM tried to develop such an anti-Centre feeling in West Bengal; but its leadership was often half-hearted and apologetic about such an attempt.

Similarly, Sharad Pawar tried to develop the theme of the Centre treating Maharashtra badly, and even tried to emphasise the point that the local leaders of the ruling party behaved like courtiers rather than popular leaders in their own right. But even he was hobnobbing with the idea of building up an all-India Congress (S) party, and could not quite drive the anti-Centre point home. Only a clear-minded and persistent but simple alternative slogan might have provided some possibility of successful regional revolts against the central ruling party.

It is also obvious that without an almost ruthless pursuit of power, success does not come to a political party. At least in politics it is true that 'conscience makes cowards of us all.' It can easily be seen that, when it came to dealing with other parties especially at the time of elections, neither Indira Gandhi nor Rajiv Gandhi gave any quarter. Even Jawaharlal Nehru, who was so respected by most of the opposition leaders, used to be quite ruthless when it came to ensuring the success of his party.

It should therefore be clear that the likelihood of an all-India opposition party evolving, and succeeding sufficiently to replace the ruling party at the Centre, is somewhat remote. What happened in 1977 was due to considerable bungling by the rulers. It is not likely that such an historical opportunity would be provided to the opposition frequently. Moreover, the only real difference between the Janata Party in Karnataka, the Telugu Desam Party in Andhra or even Sharad Pawar's

Congress (S) Party in Maharashtra on the one side, and the Congress (I) on the other, appears to be regarding the problems affecting Centre-State relations. The Akali Dal — leaving aside its fundamentalist fringe — also basically has similar differences with the Congress (I). Otherwise, the socio-economic base as well as the outlook of these parties, not only for the near future but even for the distant future, are not very different from those of the Congress (I).

The Janata Party really was an amalgam of heterogeneous opposition elements which arose in a special historical situation. The approach was to make it almost an alternative Congress but minus the authoritarian and personality-cum-dynasty trends of Indira Gandhi. It is possible that such a trend may not continue under Rajiv Gandhi. He is likely to feel less insecure and therefore might be more willing to accommodate other leaders, especially regional ones, permitting more genuine authority to Chief Ministers and State leaders, and be ready to operate as the leader of a team rather than a *supremo* surrounded by servants and courtiers. If that happens, there is no reason why he should not find it possible to accommodate regional leaders and groups such as those of Farooq Abdullah, N.T. Rama Rao, Ramakrishna Hegde and Sharad Pawar.

It is of course possible that two broad trends will emerge in the established political groups which are mainly in favour of continuing the present pace of economic and social change. One will represent the centralisers, while the other will emphasise the rights of States and the importance of redefining Centre-State relations. There will always be regions which will feel they are being unjustly treated by the Centre, and this will inevitably give rise to regional groups. To the extent that such regional groups cannot be accommodated by the existing ruling party at the Centre, they will probably find it useful to support an alternative party which will be a kind of 'Federalist' party! N.T. Rama Rao has already given an indication that he is thinking along such lines.

Whether such a party will come into existence in the near future will depend upon the extent to which Rajiv Gandhi and his coterie decide to continue the centralist trends under Indira Gandhi. If the existing regional parties get to be accommodated by a certain reorganisation of Centre-State relations, a regional grouping at the national level may not arise in the near future. But it has to arise sooner or later. Moreover, this is the trend that is more likely to pose successful challenges than a party which represents a genuine alternative ideology.

This is why it has to be understood that the CPM cannot but emerge more and more at this stage as a regional party. For, socialist or communist parties to be organised as all-India parties and pose real challenges to the existing establishment is bound to take quite some time. The main basis of such parties can only be the urban working class; because the rural proletariat is far more difficult to organise.

Moreover, with the caste factor continuing to be important in most parts of rural India, the rural poor cannot be easily brought together under one ideological banner. Organising them effectively would therefore take even longer than organising the urban working class under socialist or communist party auspices. As we see at present, the socialist or communist trade unions have given way in centres like Bombay to trade unions which almost follow pure economism. In fact, even the socialist or communist leaderships have had to practise economism in attempting to maintain their hold over the working classes. It will therefore take a long time before effective organisations of the working class emerge which would have adequate political clout to be able to pose an all-India alternative to the ruling party.

It cannot be forgotten that, in the countries in western Europe, it was largely after the second world war that parties representing labour and calling themselves socialist could take power on a somewhat stable basis; and this was after about a hundred years of industrialisation, and the growth of trade unions.

The state goes macho

HARISH KHARE

SINCE December 28, 1984, friends and foes alike have burdened Rajiv Gandhi with a charisma. Like mother, like son. Some admirers have even begun detecting similarities between the new Prime Minister and his illustrious grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru. Still others have declared him to be a kind of political Mozart.

While the Congress(I) victory is unambiguous, the nature of the mandate itself is open to different interpretations. It is of course obvious that Rajiv Gandhi and the Congress(I) managed — and managed brilliantly — to convince and even overwhelm the electorate with the 'unity in danger' theme. The question we seek to address here is: how and why?

As could be expected, the ruling party's functionaries and professional apologists have asserted that they knew all along that the voter was prepared to give Mrs Gandhi's son and political heir a massive mandate. Being wiser after the event is an old Indian weakness. But there are many reasons to doubt such post-facto assertions.

Firstly, if the Rajiv Gandhi caucus was sure of its victory, this was not at all evident when it was busy selecting the party's candidates. A leadership, confident and optimistic about the election outcome, should have been abruptly contemptuous of the cantankerous aspirants; instead, there were distinct attempts to mollycoddle the troublesome rebels. In Tamilnadu, Shivaji Ganesan and his 'fans' were wooed and finally appeased; in Maharashtra, till the last

minute, attempts continued to prevent a final parting of the ways with that man called Abdul Rehman Antulay.

On the other hand, assertive and insistent Chief Ministers — Bhajan Lal of Haryana, Arjun Singh of Madhya Pradesh, Madhavsinh Solanki of Gujarat, and Vasantdada Patil of Maharashtra — were allowed to have their say; Mrs Gandhi would have certainly found this surrender to the Chief Ministers uncharacteristic and distasteful. These postures and manoeuvres betrayed neither self-confidence nor an assurance of having any inkling of the voters' mind.

Not only was every attempt made to keep the Congress(I) troops somehow amused but definite attempts were also made to seduce as many disappointed or side-lined functionaries of the 'discredited' opposition as would care to be courted. The way All India Radio and Door-darshan went out of the way to blare out a change of heart on the part of every non-Congress(I) Tom, Dick and Harry suggested that the party leadership was far from assured about the election outcome and was, instead, preparing ground for a regime based and propped up on defections.

The ruling party's apologists would have everyone believe that the Congress(I) won because it appealed to the Indian's nationalism and that the massive mandate was a vote for 'unity'. However, this argument overlooks the fact that in the selection of candidates, calculations of caste and community were quite

decisive in the ruling party's decisions. All the traditional considerations like the Brahmin-Rajput combine in Uttar Pradesh or the Jat concentrations in Haryana mattered and figured in the selection process. And when it came to the campaigning, the ruling party's managers in each constituency could not resist the temptation of pandering to the electorate's parochial biases and prejudices. To argue — as is being done on behalf of the Congress(I) — that the December vote is essentially secular because the ruling party could make the Indian masses rise above their mundane fidelity to caste and community, is untenable. A most illustrative example is that of Delhi's Chandni Chowk constituency, where the Bharatiya Janata Party had chosen a Muslim, Sikander Bakht, to be its candidate.

Chandni Chowk is an area where orthodoxies of the Muslim, Arya Samaj and Jain varieties have always flourished. And come election time, the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid becomes a key figure in the constituency. In 1977, he is supposed to have played a decisive role in steering the constituency's as well as Delhi's Muslims away from the Congress(I); in 1980, Mrs Gandhi made her famous 'pact' with the Imam and managed to win back the support and vote of the Muslims; and, this time this 'communal' figure openly advised the Muslims to vote against the Congress(I). His appeal, however, seemed to have evoked at best a feeble response (in itself not an undesirable development).

Interestingly enough, the Congress (I) party managers were not able to gauge confidently the growing limitations of the Imam's influence with the Muslim voter; they first tried (with an obvious eye towards the Hindu supporters of the BJP) to make a point of the Imam's recent anti-India tirade in some Islamic countries; leaflets were distributed in the name of anonymous RSS workers. Yet, on election day, the walls in the Muslim areas were plastered with a poster carrying an appeal by an old Congress leader, Anwar Dehalvi, asking the people to vote for the Congress(I)'s Jai Prakash Aggarwal; and, the appeal was accomplished by a three year old pic-

ture showing Mr Dehalvi in the comradely embrace of the 'communal' Imam!

Nor could Rajiv Gandhi and his party men be entirely equanimous in the face of the opposition's efficient and potent campaign that focussed on pertinent issues. Though Punjab did become a major election theme — and we shall come to it a bit later — Atal Behari Vajpayee and others believed that the election was 'being fought on the basis of policies, programmes and performances'.¹ The opposition did raise questions like pervasive corruption, mishandling in Assam and Punjab, Rajiv Gandhi's inexperience, and the murky connections of his coterie.

The non-Congress(I) parties tried hard to bring home to the voter the central government's record of indifference, intolerance and inefficiency. The ruling party functionaries could not help being unnerved, aware as they must have been of the poor record of the Indira regime. Argued Fernandes: 'There is a tremendous awareness of national issues. In 1977 they (the people) threw out a dictatorship when people said that issues like democracy and dictatorship did not bother the Indian people. However, national issues should be related to their local problems of water, power and so on. When you say that Rs. 1,500 crore was spent on building stadium in Delhi when there is no drinking water just two kilometres away from Bangalore, people understand.'²

And yet the people refused to 'understand', just as they refused to indict a government that did not work. Why?

There was, of course, considerable abuse of governmental authority and machinery to influence the voters.³

1. *The Times of India*, December 23, 1984.

2. Interview, *The Herald Review*, December 23, 1984.

3. The most obvious example of misuse of governmental authority is from Amethi where, according to Arun Singh, Rajiv Gandhi has given 'ongoings and under construction projects worth nearly Rs. 1,000 crore, with at least one big project in each of the five assembly segments. The 40-crore HAL project at Korva in Amethi, the 25-crore BHEL plant at Jagdishpur, the

For instance, the Madhya Pradesh government announced extension of benefits of concessions enjoyed by Harijans and Adivasis to the backward classes; the Gujarat government made education free for women at all levels and promised to supply food grains for the poor at around half the price being charged at the fair price shops; the Kerala government announced pensions for the mullahs; the Jammu and Kashmir government 'regularised' all those employees who were on daily wages for the last five years; in Orissa ten foundation stones were laid for various schemes and the ceremonies were converted into campaign rallies for local Congress(I) candidates.

Similar charges were also levelled against non-Congress(I) governments in Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka. Only in the instance of the cancellation of the scheduled 'loan mela' in Arun Nehru's constituency, could the Election Commission effectively prevent misuse of governmental authority for party purposes.

Undoubtedly, misuses and abuses of incumbency as practised by the Congress(I) party are undesirable and illegal, but it cannot be persuasively argued that such blatant resort to pork-barrel politics alone can explain the huge margins scored by the ruling party.

Take, for instance, the advantage enjoyed by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in terms of having at his disposal the entire transport fleet of the Indian Air Force; no doubt this gave him a tremendous edge and enabled him to address as many as 250 election meetings and over 100 road side gatherings in as many as 248 constituencies. He travelled — courtesy of the IAF — 25,000 kilometres by aircraft, 17,000 by helicopter, besides 5,000 kilometres by car; he is calculated to have addressed gatherings totalling 2.5 crore people. Yet in itself this logistical advantage was not very crucial. For instance, in the 1980 campaign and out-of-power, Mrs Indira Gandhi

750-crore fertilizer plant in Tiloi, the 10-crore Samrat cycles plant in Gauriganj and the Vespa scooter plant of Lohia Machines in Salon.' *The Week*, December 23-29, 1984.

could cover many more constituencies as well as address larger crowds than Rajiv Gandhi managed in 1984.⁴

Not that these considerations were irrelevant, but it would be a serious mistake to assign the misuse of governmental machinery a crucial explanatory power. On the other hand, three other aspects of the voters' behaviour need to be examined.

First, Rajiv Gandhi did manage to convey the theme of one leader/one party. The emphasis on leader and leadership was unmistakable. The Congress(I) candidates themselves believed in their leader. Argued Kamal Nath: 'Let us be under no illusion. All the votes belong to Indiraji and Rajiv Gandhi. The candidates only subtract from these because of their minus points.'⁵

For their part, the masses chose to believe in the Congress(I) slogan of a clean and efficient leader. A prepoll survey found that even in the relatively well informed and educated metropolitan cities of Bombay, Calcutta, Madras and New Delhi, the majority of those interviewed had not heard of Arun Nehru and Arun Singh and those who had heard of the presence of these backroom boys did not think it reflected adversely on Rajiv Gandhi.⁶

This popular disposition was summed up well by an admiring scribe; 'Well, the Congress(I) has many faults. Yes, dynastic rule in a democracy is bad. But, then, what can be done? If others are not capable of ruling and governing, it is better that we have a government which works, even if slowly, inefficiently

and with much corruption, than instability. The Congressmen know how to run a government. They know how to rule. See how they unitedly elected Rajiv Gandhi and have now rallied together behind him.'⁷

The voters preferred to believe in the Congress(I) promise of stability. Apparently the electorate was still unable to overcome its disappointment at the Janata Government's failure to hold together. Nor did the opposition's failure despite a number of well publicised conclaves to produce a semblance of unity create a sanguine impression on the voter. Vajpayee and other opposition leaders chose to put their faith in the generosity of the Indian voters and hoped that if they could forgive Mrs Gandhi for the excesses of the Emergency regime, they could easily overlook the Janata failures in 1977-79.⁸

The Congress Party of Rajiv Gandhi and Arun Nehru could invoke the loyalty of the old Congress constituency — the constituency that thought of the Congress(I) still as the party of the national struggle, of Gandhi and Nehru. The poor, particularly the Harijans and Adivasis, chose to remain enthralled of the Congress(I) as the instrument of social mobility and social justice.⁹ On the other hand, they decided to ignore their misgivings about the likes of Bhajan Lal and J.B. Patnaik. At the same time, they refused to give credit to the good work and pro-poor inclination of the Hegde ministry in Karnataka.

Still, there is no satisfying or convincing answer to the question: *Why the overwhelming response to Rajiv Gandhi?* We must therefore now turn to the Punjab issue and the themes and images it invoked.

During the campaign, Rajiv Gandhi talked incessantly of Punjab,

the Akali Dal, Jagjit Singh Chauhan, Anandpur Sahib, Resolution and Bhindranwale. The seasoned opposition leaders, who had thought that immature Rajiv's accession to the prime ministership would only be an ephemeral prelude to their own triumph, made the mistake of talking back and getting bogged down in the Khalistan quagmire.

It must be recognized that Rajiv Gandhi succeeded brilliantly in a vital respect where his mother had of late failed conspicuously: in setting and controlling agenda for national debate. Once Rajiv struck the Punjab note, the opposition veterans tried in vain to drown him in their own cacophony. These old timers responded as if they were participating in an academic seminar where points were to be scored with the help of extensive quotations and long foot-notes; the brash Rajiv indeed taught them what crass partisan rhetoric was all about.

Of course, All India Radio and Doordarshan came handy; the government managed media would simply report, often in great detail, the young Prime Minister's charges on Punjab against the opposition. Yes, the opposition's rejoinders were also dutifully—but just barely—aired. The ruling party's enormous advantages in resources and advertising talent were used to drive home the partisan point that if the Punjab problem had remained intractable it was only because of the aid and comfort provided by the non-Congress (I) leaders to a fellow-opposition party, the Akali Dal.¹⁰ The unfairness and irresponsiveness of these charges was noted and negatively commented upon¹¹; nor did the dangers

4. According to one account, 'the moment the elections were announced, Mrs Gandhi was on her feet. During 83 days of campaign ending on January 4 (1980), she toured for 63 days and nights covering 63,594 kilometers. She addressed 1,115 meetings. The number of those who attended her meetings was estimated to be 240 million. In all she directly communicated to the voters in 384 constituencies.' G.G. Mirchandani, *The Verdict*, cited in N.L. Chowla, 'Vote for the Voice,' *Times of India*, December 2, 1984.

5. *The Hindustan Times*, December 17, 1984.

6. *The Sunday*, December 23-29, 1984.

7. B.N. Uniyal, in *Patriot*, December 23, 1984.

8. *The Times of India*, December 23, 1984.

9. In a number of areas Adivasi people were reported to have stood in line for hours to get posters of Mrs Gandhi to take them home for worshipping. A PTI report, in *Patriot*, December 17, 1984.

10. The ruling party had an advertisement budget, predominantly for the press, of about Rs. seven crore. See *Sunday*, December 9-15, 1984.

11. See editorial in *Indian Express*, December 13, 1984. 'This (Rajiv charges) is irresponsible poppycock. He is not the sole defender of the nation's unity and integrity,' also see a *Herald Review* (December 23, 1984) editorial: 'Lamentably, Mr. Gandhi continues to harangue his countrywide audiences with the "sinister" designs of the forces of disintegration that have been abetted by the opposition, aided by "external forces" who mowed down Mrs Gandhi in the hope that the

of constant harping on the Anandpur Sahib Resolution go unobserved.¹² But Rajiv Gandhi had no time or inclination to listen to advice on political niceties; for him, it was a 'make it or break it' campaign.

Rajiv Gandhi succeeded because knowingly or unknowingly—probably more knowingly than unknowingly—he capitalized on the growing mass insecurities, generated in no small measure by his mother's regime that was marked by what Hobbes called 'a perpetual and restless desire for power after power that ceaseth only in death.'¹³ Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was certainly mindful of the growing insecurities in the country. 'I think firstly there is terrible shock at the Prime Minister's assassination and a feeling of having lost everything. We had really become headless or leaderless ... the (elections are) crucial because we have lost a leader who had sort of stabilised the country and guided us for a very long time now. And that presence missing makes it very critical for us in the country.'¹⁴

Conscious manipulation of mass insecurities is, of course, not a new phenomenon. As early as 1936, the great master, Harold Lasswell, had noted: 'The rulers of yesterday who depended upon bread, circuses, and wars to protect them from domestic disturbances are superseded by rulers who are adept at diverting, distracting, confusing and dissipating the insecurities of the mass by the circulation of efficacious symbols.'¹⁵

country would fall apart. He has not stopped to think whether it is advisable to identify the nation's unity and integrity with a single party — his own — and brand all other parties as subversive.'

12 Retired Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana, R S. Narula argued: 'Mr Gandhi's laboured charge on the nature of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution simply cannot be sustained and its iteration day in and day out can only exacerbate the already pervasive sense of alienation and alarm that the Sikhs have been feeling.' Letter to Editor, *The Indian Express*, December 17, 1984.

13 Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Part I, Chapter XI.

14. Interview to *Gulf News* of Dubai, reproduced in *Patriot*, December 17, 1984.

15. Harold Lasswell, *World Politics and Personal Insecurity*, p. 19.

Historically, authoritarian regimes have been most prone to play upon the populace's fears and mistrusts about internal and external enemies. Hitler achieved tremendous success in this game; in modern times we have, on the other hand, Ayatollah Khomeini creating, adding and then manipulating Iranian fears about the 'satanic' America and the non-Islamic world in general; on the other hand, there is Ronald Reagan masterfully keeping the Americans on their toes about the 'evil empire' headquartered in the Kremlin.

The other aspect of this manipulation of mass insecurities is that such fears are best generated and controlled by and in the name of a 'leader'. Even the Chinese Communist theoreticians have come to recognise this phenomenon: 'on the question of publicity of an individual's role in history, there has been considerable confusion on our part, both ideologically and theoretically in all these years, and it has not been fully clarified to this day. Some comrades are often swayed by the small producers' ideological influence ... the shaky position of the small producer determines that he cannot be far-sighted and will look at someone else to represent him. As often as not he will not turn to the great saviour while regarding himself as completely helpless.'¹⁶ Rajiv Gandhi's great success was in reducing 700 million Indians into a pack of 'small producers' and then selling himself as the 'great saviour.'

The liberals, of course, missed the import of his Punjab motif; instead, they argued that 'perhaps Mr Gandhi needs to appreciate that this country has been through a lot and may be less nervous than he fears.'¹⁷ But what Mr Gandhi was engaged in was a deliberate exercise of adding to that collective nervousness.

However, the key to the Rajiv success is that he was not just another petty politician making jingoistic noises; he was in fact speaking from

16. 'On Personality Cult and Other Questions,' *Red Flag* (Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party), December 16, 1980.

17. Gautam Adhikari, 'The Congress Campaign — Crocodiles and Wolves' *Times of India*, December 18, 1984.

the commanding heights of the Indian State. Never before had the pulpit of the Indian State been used to arouse the masses against an internal adversary. Mrs Gandhi's assassination was equated in the public mind with an assault on the Indian State and that perception was constantly reinforced. And if in a modern polity like the United States the voters could become enamoured of a leader wrapped in the flag, it is entirely understandable that the masses in a traditional society should have failed to resist appeals made from the ramparts of the State. That Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister and throughout the campaign was surrounded by the trappings of that office made his jingoistic message deadly.

When a seasoned observer talked of 'the closed roads, barriers, spot checks, metal detectors, personal frisking, helicopters, bullet proof cars, shaded glass and specially trained commandos' and concluded that 'a leader who must live in constant fear of his safety cannot inspire confidence of his people,'¹⁸ the observer missed altogether the point that the helicopters and the military *bandobast* only added to the image of a virile, dynamic and potent leader (in sharp contrast to the old, tottering presence of Charan Singh, Chandrashekhar, Bahuguna) valiantly upholding the banner of the State — and a Macho State, at that.

The full propaganda resources of a modern government were unleashed to depict Mrs Gandhi's assassination as an assault on the Indian State. As it was, the Indian machismo was sagging; the macho pride experienced at the triumph over the Pakistani Army in 1971 was, of late, constantly pricked by the intransigence of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal and by Pakistan's calculated indifference to New Delhi's wishes. Added to this psychological 'low' was the contumacy in Punjab. A society so repeatedly treated to the sorry spectacle of governmental impotence in the face of a defiant Bhindranwale eagerly rallied to the young, daring, bold leader promising light at the end of the tunnel.

18. Sunanda K. Datta-Ray, 'Preparing for the Battle-II', *Statesman*, December 3, 1984.

A classic example of pandering to the growing sense of insecurity was the documentary *Bharat Mata ki Pukar* released by the Films Division of India throughout the country's 11,000 theatres one week before polling day. Aesthetically crude and poor, the documentary effectively mixed footage of Indira Gandhi's assassination and the Republic Day parades to drive home the point of a besieged and helpless Mother India while a jingled voice exhorted the audience to hold the Bharat Mata's 'hand' in this hour of crisis. By the time this 20 minute documentary ends with a sombre Rajiv Gandhi staring blankly into his mother's funeral pyre, the benumbed viewer was susceptible to the theme of India-Indira-Rajiv Gandhi.

The government and the ruling party not only depicted Rajiv Gandhi as the symbol and embodiment of the aroused Machismo, they also sought to portray the opposition as somewhat unclean, defiled; for example, Indian Youth Congress(I) general secretary, Anand Sharma, charged that the opposition was trying to play down the martyrdom of Mrs Indira Gandhi but took solace from the knowledge that the masses were fully aware of the role the opposition parties played in giving encouragement to communal and divisive forces which led to the assassination of Mrs Gandhi.¹⁹ And though Rajiv Gandhi himself did not apportion to the opposition any blame for the assassination, he did imply that its leaders had countenanced the terrorists' activities from inside the Golden Temple in Amritsar.²⁰

That Rajiv Gandhi could be sold — and bought — as the symbol of a Macho State was undoubtedly facilitated by his position as prime minister. Whether such a blatant misuse of the incumbency can be

checked is anybody's guess.²¹ However, the ramification of the December elections are far from reassuring.

First, the verdict would suggest that poor governmental performance can be overcome by manipulation of symbols. As it is, the masses have low expectations from the government, and even these lowered expectations can be satiated with vague evidence of dubious 'progress'. A party like the Congress(I) need no longer be interested in genuine redistribution of wealth or creation of a humane and egalitarian social order as long as it has its slogans right.

Second, the political system's limited efficacy stands accepted. So long as a regime is not overtly repressive or vigorously anti-poor, the masses would tolerate and even accept it and would leave it alone to pursue its own megalomaniac designs.

Lastly, Rajiv Gandhi's triumph makes no qualitative difference in the country's authoritarian political culture. The emphasis on the leader, unquestioned charisma, remains unchanged. Though the new Prime Minister may maintain the pretences of a liberal system, sooner or later his regime would have to tackle the complex problems of the Indian polity and economic underdevelopment. Since Rajiv Gandhi and his close advisers have had no experience of political give and take, it is quite possible that the regime may succumb to the authoritarian impulses which impell a ruler towards a conclusion that 'to achieve a comprehensive improvement of society you need comprehensive powers, so you must regard all resistance to yourself as high treason and must put it down mercilessly.'²²

21. There are a number of reports, all unheeded, suggesting reforms in the electoral system so as to make the elections honest and genuine. The ultimate solution is to insist that the moment elections are announced the central government would become a caretaker government and that the Prime Minister — irrespective of security considerations — would enjoy no special privileges. See, A G. Noorani, 'Election Commission and Fair Poll,' *The Indian Express*, November 29, 1984.

22. Michael Polanyi, quoted in Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 'Politics as the Art of the Impossible,' *American Scholar* (Autumn 1969).

19. *Patriot*, December 11, 1984.

20. For example, in election speeches in Bombay, Rajiv Gandhi alleged that though three members of the Opposition, who had held high positions in the Janata Government, had gone into the Golden Temple, they had come out with the report that there were no terrorists inside. Yet, within 10 days of this statement, an arms factory was unearthed inside the temple. *The Indian Express*, December 16, 1984.

Star charisma

RAJNI BAKSHI

THE emergence of Hindi film stars on the national political scene has dismayed much of the urban intelligentsia. The victory of all three Congress(I) star candidates has only further compounded despair in these circles about the electorate's level of political consciousness. The media has tended to share this stance of mild condescension. The press, which earlier analysed the stars' campaigns on their own merits, has, in view of the unprecedented landslide victory, generally attributed the success of the film stars entirely to the overwhelming force of the Indira-Rajiv tidal wave.

Like much of pre-election analysis which is coloured by wishful thinking, the attitude towards the stars is based on the belief that actors with no credentials for being Members of Parliament cannot possibly be a force to reckon with. Certainly, the Hindi film stars are not poised to exercise an influence over national politics to match the role their counterparts have played in the politics of the southern States. But

the selection of film stars for Congress(I) tickets, their victories and reports of tickets to more film stars in the forthcoming Assembly elections, are indicators of a larger trend which extends beyond the realm of star charisma alone.

This is not to belittle the continuing importance of the 'charisma factor' in Indian politics. And 'filmi' charisma is probably the most potent variety of this adulation-based ingredient. But, while film culture has an undeniable role in shaping the popular psyche, star popularity alone cannot automatically be translated into political gains. The success of the star candidates has as much to do with the fact that they were backed by the Congress(I) machinery as the simple fact that they were not perceived as 'politicians'.

Before examining the mechanics of one of these campaigns in detail, it is important to differentiate the northern film star phenomenon from that of the southern States. There is

also need to understand how the imagery and sounds of films influence the formation of popular perceptions. Only then is it possible to assess the potential of star charisma in national politics, and to understand the role it appears slated to play.

The most common explanation for the political successes of south Indian stars, as opposed to the relatively peripheral political involvement of their north Indian counterparts, has been the difference in the cultural and social content of their films. Hindi films are aimed at a national market and thus usually have no clear regional identity or cultural cohesiveness. Regional films, by and large, are based in an identifiable social-cultural setting, which audiences relate to more directly and which evokes a stronger response. But if this were the only key to successfully connecting films and politics, Maharashtra and West Bengal, which have a sizeable regional commercial cinema, should also have produced film stars who successfully turned politicians.

This has not happened, firstly, because the reach to cinema is nowhere as extensive as it is in the four southern States. Over fifty per cent of all the cinemas in India are located in Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Secondly, politics and film making have been consciously and closely linked in the south to an extent not matched in any other region. The political linkages of cinema in the south date back to the freedom movement. In the subsequent decades, an intricate network of linkages has been developed and maintained systematically to further the film and political careers of select performers. The result has been the emergence of M. G. Ramachandran, N. T. Rama Rao, Shivaji Ganesan, Raj Kumar *et al.*

Each of these heroes carefully cultivated a screen image conducive to building mass popularity of a particular kind. MGR played Robin Hood type roles and NTR was famous for portraying gods or god-like figures. The politically ambitious stars also encouraged the establishment of fan clubs in their territory and kept in touch with

political parties and issues. Merely the advantage of being perceived of as a Robin Hood or 'Anna' (brother) is insufficient. These stars have successfully translated the imagery of films into electoral gains through a political machinery which raised potent issues and effectively exploited popular sentiments. The beleaguered H.N. Bahuguna, while bitterly criticising his opponent, Amitabh Bachchan, never tired of repeating that NTR swept Andhra out of the Congress (I) fold because he spent a year consolidating his star popularity with a live political organisation.

Since the mechanics of NTR's rise to power are well documented and widely known, this aspect need not be elaborated here. The point is that the popularity and political involvement of Hindi film stars has been of an entirely different nature. It is therefore necessary to limit the present discussion to the more recent trend of Hindi film stars entering electoral politics.

The Hindi film stars' political connections have till now been largely limited to maintaining useful contacts with the ruling party in order to ease their way through the occasional problem with the Film Censor Board or the Income Tax department. Though the national popularity of certain stars has, in terms of the hysteria and euphoria generated, far surpassed the popularity of some south Indian stars, fan clubs and institutionalisation of popularity has been unknown in the north. Yet the popular Hindi cinema, and consequently its stars, influences audience perceptions as much as it reflects them.

It is widely accepted that commercial Hindi cinema, usually dismissed as 'escapist trash', consciously caters to the dreams and aspirations of its audiences. For all its absurdity, audiences do relate to the imagery and music of the commercial Hindi film at a subliminal if not an obvious level. When all the fantasies the dream merchants can churn out are embodied in one performer, the result is mass star hysteria of which Amitabh Bachchan is probably the best example in the history of Hindi cinema.

But, clearly, screen popularity alone cannot be converted into political success. Dilip Kumar, a phenomenal star of his time, dabbled unsuccessfully in politics. Another current Hindi film star, Jeetendra, acts in more films than Bachchan and probably has an equal number of hits to his credit but his public image is non-descript in comparison to Bachchan's. Therefore, the character of a screen image and the quality of popularity appear to be important factors in determining the political viability of a star. Sunil Dutt, for example, attempted to cash in on his 'Mother India' image during the election campaign. Even more importantly, there is a need for independent active political linkages or association with a political party.

Not even the most intense kind of film based popularity can be converted into political success without such linkages. (But it is not clear whether the reverse is automatically true. It is possible that intense star charisma is not necessary in order to take advantage of the linkages. Vijayantimala's case seems to illustrate this point. She is no longer a popular actress and even in her hey day was not well-known to Tamil audiences. Yet she emerged victorious from a Madras city constituency).

Thus, for a variety of reasons Bachchan's candidature was the most interesting. Not only was he the only reigning top star among the three nominated, but due to a combination of factors, Bachchan's popularity had stronger ingredients for a political career than any of his predecessors in the 'top star' slot. The now clichéd 'angry young man' role which Bachchan has played for over a decade, embodied the frustrations of an entire generation and fed its fantasies of triumph against all odds. There was a clear pattern to most of Bachchan's hit films. He played an underprivileged, often orphaned, youth who goes from rags to riches usually by taking to crime but eventually beats the villains at their own game and also manages to keep his heart of pure gold, untarnished.

Over the last one and a half year, this image was taken to its logical

conclusion in a set of so-called 'political films'. The most infamous of these films, called 'Inquilaab', showed Bachchan, in the role of an unemployed graduate who is taken under the wings of a goon squad and eventually elevated to the post of Chief Minister — to serve as a rubber stamp for all the goons' misdeeds. In anger and frustration, the hero finally shoots his entire council of ministers with a machine gun and fulfills the vigilante role which is expected to appeal to audiences.

This film, one among several of this sort, projected a dangerous trend in Hindi films which portrayed the corruption and decay of the prevalent political reality and then projected violent vigilantism as the only solution. The unavoidable question then was: could this type of image be easily translated into the political realm and if so to what effect?

Therefore, when Bachchan was given the Congress(I) ticket for the Allahabad seat, this was among the more disturbing aspects of his candidature. Bahuguna tried, without much success, to highlight this but Bachchan cleverly side stepped the issue by playing down his violent screen image.

The popular appeal of a star like Bachchan is in some respects similar to the charismatic appeal of a political leader like Mrs. Gandhi, though both operate at a different level and manner. Charisma has been described by Max Weber¹ as: 'a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, super-human or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.'

The above description could quite aptly and in total be applied to the

position Mrs. Gandhi came to acquire and Rajiv Gandhi appears well on his way to achieving. It is also partially applicable to film stars who may be perceived as having the super-human and exceptional qualities but are not automatically considered leaders of divine origin. But given the fact that the star personality is at conscious or subliminal level perceived as having the special qualities, he is equipped to elevate himself to the position of charismatic authority. This ought to be possible since both the popular appeal of a film star and the charismatic appeal of a political leader are essentially illusory.

'Charismatic authority is thus specifically outside the realm of everyday routine and the profane sphere. In this respect, it is sharply opposed both to rational and particularly bureaucratic authority and to traditional authority...Bureaucratic authority is specifically rational in the sense of being bound to intellectually analysable rules; while charismatic authority is specifically irrational in the sense of being foreign to all rules. Traditional authority is bound to the precedents handed down from the past and to this extent is also oriented to rules.' — Max Weber.

The 'specifically irrational' is a characteristic common to the appeal of both the charismatic political leaders and the popular film stars. This is not to say that because he has the screen image of a superman, the audience thinks the star capable of performing Herculean deeds in reality. The mechanics of star popularity and its possible transformation into charismatic authority are far more subtle. Audiences, from different socio-economic strata, may or may not directly relate to the vigilante, god-like or otherwise heroic image of a star. But there is for some a conscious and for others a subliminal sense of familiarity with the performer, which makes him an integral part of each person's personal experience.

This was witnessed in the response of the crowds that gathered to hear Bachchan in Allahabad. Bachchan's voice and mannerisms were as familiar to most urban listeners, at elec-

tion meetings, as those of a friend and thus received with an equal amount of warmth and affection. So when the candidate confessed to this rapt audience that he knew nothing about politics or the ways of government, they admired him for his honesty. When he gently preached about the need to make Rajiv Gandhi Prime Minister and 'save the country' the audience responded with thunderous applause.

The opposition's judgement that the electorate was not 'gullible' enough to vote for the tinsel-town hero they mobbed in the streets, was based on an erroneous analysis of the situation. Those who hoped to see Bachchan lose also predicted that he would be routed in the rural segments of the constituency, where he is not known. They were wrong. Just as the opposition, and most political analysts, did not see the 'wave', they did not realise the futility of criticising the stars for an inability to debate real issues. Issues of the sort that are normally raised in assessing a government's performance had almost no role in this election.

The stars therefore had a natural advantage and this was nowhere more apparent than in Bachchan's campaign. He made primarily one demand on both urban and rural voters — that they follow their hearts and not heads when going to cast their vote. And most hearts dictated a combination of sympathy for Rajiv Gandhi plus a warmth towards the star.

Bachchan's biggest advantage was in fact simply that he was not a politician. But Bahuguna, clinging to the erroneous notion that this was Bachchan's biggest shortcoming, insisted that as a seasoned politician with an understanding of the people's problems and the working of government he was a more deserving candidate for being a Member of Parliament. But that Bahuguna had a 'base' or experience did not matter. His kind of 'seasoned politician' was just what the electorate wanted to reject. Thus, star appeal combined with the burgeoning charismatic appeal of Rajiv was too strong a match for a relatively lack-lustre leader of almost zero credibility.

If one accepts the basic premise that Indian politics has been gradually 'depoliticised', then the 1984 elections appear to have completed the process. The entry of film stars, sports stars, who have no real political base, into electoral politics is one of the clearest illustrations of how the traditional politician with a base, ideology, party organisation and programme has been replaced by non-politicians. But, if this generalisation were applicable across the board, then many of the remaining older politicians within the Congress (I) should also have lost.

On the other hand, it could be argued that many of the older and old style politicians who emerged victorious have won on the Rajiv vote which is a vote for change and will probably lead to a greater thrust towards de-politicisation. But in this case the election of the stars could also be dismissed as being purely the result of this Rajiv wave.

Since a complex set of factors is at work here it would be over-simplistic to attribute the stars' victory entirely to the 'wave'. Besides, it is more important to understand the implications of the stars' nomination in the first place. The entry of stars into electoral politics appears to be an indicator of Rajiv Gandhi's political strategy, which is essentially a continuation of the style initiated by his mother. If elections are to be won almost solely by evoking emotional responses and inciting reactionary forces, then film stars have a natural role to perform in such a strategy. They are almost half way there to wielding charismatic authority and perfectly poised to enhance an emotional appeal and lend it more credibility.

The electorate's susceptibility to such reactionary forces can either be bemoaned as 'gullibility' or understood as an inevitable stance born out of a lack of options. Why this is so and how it can be remedied is the subject for a much wider area of enquiry. Similarly, if star charisma is to be considered an unhealthy and retrograde phenomenon, it must be examined and understood as one of many symptoms. The increasing use of star charisma in national politics is not itself the malady.

The regional factor

G. S. BHARGAVA

THE decision of N.T. Rama Rao to launch a federal party at the national level — Bharat Desam or Indian country literally — offers a more cogent explanation for the largely unforeseen outcome of the recent Lok Sabha elections than the reams of newsprint devoted to the purpose by experts and others. It sums up the need for the regional pulls manifest in different parts of the country to be consolidated at the all-India level on a footing of equality.

The days of a single person, however wily and powerful and even if backed by a caucus of unscrupulous operators, lording it over, making and unmaking State cabinets, subverting potential political rivals and destabilising, with the help of pliable mercenaries, governments which do not toe his or her line are over. Rajiv Gandhi may have led his mother's party to an unprecedented victory at the hustings amassing a four-fifths majority of seats in the eighth Lok Sabha but he is no longer projected, as in 1983, as the hope of the nation. He is merely the first among equals and he seems to acknowledge the position.

At the same time, the regional level leaders like Rama Rao in Andhra Pradesh, Ramakrishna Hegde, despite some setbacks, in Karnataka, Karunanidhi in Tamil Nadu, Farooq Abdullah in Kashmir, Nar Bahadur Bhandari in Sikkim and

Jyoti Basu in West Bengal, stalwarts though they are in their respective areas, cannot claim an all-India stature. They can provide a collective leadership. In this respect there is a vacuum of leadership at the national level but it is sought to be filled on the federal principle.

The phenomenon has been there ever since Nehru passed away. But scared by the unknown prospect of 'after Nehru, what?' we tried to build Lal Bahadur Shastri and then Indira Gandhi in the Nehru image, in the latter case with disastrous consequences for the polity. (Even the gods could not have shaped Morarji Desai in that pattern and hence the fiasco of the Janata experiment.) After Lal Bahadur's premature death in 1966 a syndicate of regional operators 'created' Indira Gandhi as a front for their mutually convenient overlordship of the people. They did not constitute a collective leadership nor were they guided by the federal principle. Kamaraj Nadar, Atulya Ghosh, S.K. Patil, Sanjiva Reddy, C.B. Gupta *et al* banded themselves into what was seen as a power behind the throne to manipulate Indira Gandhi who was then in Ram Manohar Lohia's words 'a dumb doll.' But they breathed so much guile into it that very soon Indira Gandhi beat them at their own game. She had at her disposal the State apparatus — the power of patronage, the intelligence agencies and the military also — which they lacked.

On the surface it will appear odd that on the morrow of the unprecedented victory of Rajiv Gandhi and his Congress(I), on a rhetorical plank of national unity and indivisibility of India, the leader of a 'regional' party like Telugu Desam should think of a federal grouping of regional forces as a potential alternative to the ruling party at the Centre. As if anticipating the prospect, Rajiv had during the campaign taunted Rama Rao at a public meeting at Warangal whether a proliferation of 'desams' — Telugu Desam, Punjab Desam, Kashmir Desam, Utkal Desam, etc., — would not harm the interests of Bharat Desam. The answer is a definite 'no'. On the other hand, it consolidates the nation and lends cohesion to it.

It will make India more vibrant and strong. A close look at the voting pattern in some of the States and the urge of the electorate it reflects will show that the trend is unmistakably towards the regions and away from an omnipotent Centre.

The Telugu Desam experience in Andhra Pradesh is an instance in point. Its thumping victory in the 1983 State Assembly elections was sought to be belittled as entirely due to Rama Rao's cinematic glamour. The present Union Minister of State for Labour, Anjaiah — a former chief minister of Andhra Pradesh — continues to claim that minus his 'philmī' glamour NTR is all clay feet, like himself. He had waxed eloquent on the theme at the AICC(I) sessions at Bombay and Calcutta. His fellow, though rival, leaders of the Congress(I) in the State kept up the chorus. The alibi came in handy for Indira Gandhi who looked upon the 1983 upset as a personal affront to her power and prestige and whose ego was bruised in the process.

So, a dual-track strategy was worked out to overcome Rama Rao: first, to mount an all-out onslaught on him by highlighting his 'nepotism,' 'corruption' and 'tax evasion' and secondly, by recruiting other film stars to match his popularity. It was a hilarious sight to see some of the Congress(I) 'netas' tie themselves up in knots denouncing Rama Rao's partiality for his sons and son-in-law and defending Rajiv Gandhi's succession in the same breath. An actress of yesteryears was pressed into service to pour ridicule on him and juxtapose his 'regionalism' against the 'international character' of Indira Gandhi's leadership. The exercise misfired in the later part of 1983 and 1984 with the Congress(I) again drawing a blank in by-elections to the State Assembly and the Lok Sabha.

The abortive destabilisation of the NTR Government in August last was too obtrusive to need recapitulation here. Reeling under the popular upsurge against the crude manoeuvre, the Congress(I) was at one time hesitant to face the electorate. It seemed that the impact of 'Operation Bluestar' in the Golden Temple at Amritsar had

been diluted, if not neutralised, not only in Andhra Pradesh but in other parts of the country as well. There was talk of postponement of the Lok Sabha elections and amendment of the Constitution to switch over to a presidential form of government. Some observers even speculated on the possibility of a surgical strike at Sri Lanka—on the lines of the Bangladesh operation in 1971 and the more recent military exploits by Margaret Thatcher in Falklands and Ronald Reagan in tiny Grenada.

Such thinking obviously owed itself to the assumption that 'regionalism' was the new opium of the masses and needed to be countered by a more potent potion in the shape of aggressive nationalism. The positive aspect of the regional appeal was overlooked. Instead, the greatness of India was sought to be raised on hegemonistic foundations. At several seminars, some intellectuals of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses would contend that India with her size, population, industrial strength, economic power and military might was a potential super power and should start playing the role in the south Asian region, to begin with. If she did not do so she would be pushed around, weakened and even fragmented. Those like me who did not buy the theory were dubbed pale-faced popinjays whose patriotism was suspect.

That such an India would be built on the super power model did not worry the experts. It was one thing to castigate the U.S., and sometimes the U.S.S.R. also, for their policies of spheres of influence and hegemony over immediate and distant neighbours and quite another to advocate their emulation by India in her march to a super power status. Nor were they encumbered by qualms of conscience that the edifice of perceived greatness was being built on the quicksands of expensive gimmicks like the Asiad 1982 which, together with the growing military expenditure, distorted socio-economic priorities.

What was sought to be maligned as regionalism was the people's reaction to such megalomania. Its

sectarian dimension is secondary. Once the national priorities are set right and the path to real greatness and genuine strength is discovered through nation-building and uplift of the masses, the regions will fall in line and join the mainstream. Rama Rao's idea of Bharat Desam is in a way a response to Rajiv Gandhi's new style of leadership, jettisoning, or at least seeming to jettison, his mother's shortsighted policies.

To revert to the pre-election scenario, the cowardly assassination of Indira Gandhi obviated the need for desperate remedies like postponement of the elections and recourse to a presidential type of democracy. In this sense, the fell deed had a positive purpose. Indira Gandhi better served the cause of democracy by her death than while she was alive. For the party which suffixed her name to its nomenclature, her murder and its timing were veritable godsend. The brazenness with which some of its leaders like Vasant Sathe, Ghani Khan Chaudhry and Shiv Shankar scrambled for the urns containing her ashes and the callous use of her name and picture in the electioneering showed it. Whether she shed her blood for the country or not, she definitely did it for her party.

The assassination has also smoothed the succession and almost drained it of its dynastic character. That at the height — or was it the depth? — of the Emergency, the nation, shackled and prostrate, would not swallow Sanjay's assumption of de facto power, was proof of the deeply-felt reservations on the subject. Seven years after, Rajiv's succession went like a hot knife through butter. The people have voted massively for a change from mother to son.

There are very few instances in history of martyrdom being so richly and quickly rewarded. Thirty-seven years after Gandhiji's assassination the ghost of a Hindu backlash remains to be buried. If the position of the American blacks is the yardstick, Martin Luther King had died in vain. Potti Sriramulu's supreme sacrifice might have hastened the separation of the Andhra districts from the former Madras Presidency

but the demons gnawing at the emotional integration of the Rayalaseema and Telengana regions of Andhra Pradesh have yet to be exorcised. In the case of Indira Gandhi, however, her fond wish to keep the prime ministership within the family has been resoundingly fulfilled, that, too, within 61 days of her death.

That the Telugu Desam came out with flying colours in the Lok Sabha elections is obvious. It is the single largest group on the opposition benches; its success in terms of seats contested and won is 87.5 per cent, more than that of the Congress(I) at 82.6 per cent. It also carried to victory on its shoulders its local allies, the CPM, the CPI, the BJP and the Janata.

While the Congress(I) gained 401 of the 485 seats it contested or less than 50 per cent of the popular vote, the built-in vagary in the electoral system did not similarly favour the Telugu Desam. There is a more rational correlation between the votes polled and seats won in the case of the Telugu Desam. Above all, while fragmented opposition and multilateral contests helped the Congress(I), in most parts of the country the Telugu Desam had to contend with an almost evenly polarised electoral atmosphere in Andhra Pradesh. These qualitative aspects have to be borne in mind for a comprehensive understanding of how the nation voted last December.

In quantitative terms, while the Congress(I) tally of 401 seats included 289 won on a majority vote and the rest of 112 on the basis of mere plurality, the corresponding figures for the Telugu Desam are 23 and 5 respectively. In percentage terms, the figures are 72 per cent majority wins for the Congress(I) and 82 per cent similar gains for the Telugu Desam. While only two of the 485 Congress(I) candidates lost their deposits — which was a remarkable performance — no Telugu Desam nominee forfeited his or her security.

The same pattern, more or less, obtains in the case of other regional parties like the AIADMK, the DMK, the Farooq wing of the Kashmir National Conference and the CPM which is virtually a regional

party in West Bengal and Tripura. The AIADMK has won all the 12 Lok Sabha seats it contested, eleven of them on a majority vote and the remaining by plurality. It did not lose any deposit. Even the DMK which was badly mauled in the fray, bagging only one of the 27 seats it contested, did not lose any deposit and the solitary win was also by a clear majority.

Similarly, the Farooq faction of the National Conference in Kashmir has won three out of the four seats it contested by a clear majority and no deposits were lost. The CPM's performance in West Bengal — even leaving out Tripura — has a likeness to that of other regional parties, though at the national level the picture gets blurred. Even then, considering that 21 of the party's 22 seats in the eighth Lok Sabha are from West Bengal (19) and Tripura (2), the other was by courtesy of the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh — and that no deposits had been lost in either of these States, the pattern is clear. Eleven of the 22 seats were secured by the CPM by a clear majority and the rest by virtue of plurality.

A look at the performance of the non-Congress(I) 'national' parties confirms the conclusion that the regional factor is the crux. The BJP which has the dubious distinction of losing the largest number of deposits (108 in 221 seats it fought) did not lose any in Madhya Pradesh even though it did not win any of the 39 seats it contested in the State. Charan Singh's party in U.P. and the Janata in Karnataka and Orissa present a similar picture. As regional parties they might have given a much better account of themselves than they did when overstretched on the national plane.

Another aspect of the electoral performance of the regional parties is equally revealing. It is the margin of victory. Only in 249 of the 401 seats it won has the Congress(I) a more than 50 per cent margin. Eighteen of the seats were managed with less than 5 per cent margin, a case of scraping through. The comparative figures for Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh are ten seats by more than 50 per cent margin,

two with between 50 and 40 per cent margin, three with between ten and five per cent margin and four with less than five per cent margin. The score of the AIADMK is even more impressive. Six of its 12 seats were won with more than 50 per cent margin, two others with between 50 and 40 per cent margin and only one with less than five per cent margin. The CPM, however, scraped through in nine of the 22 constituencies in which it registered a win.

The statistical evidence apart, the preference of voters and candidates is clearly for the region. In Orissa it was said by both Janata and Congress(I) supporters that an Utkal Desam on the lines of Rama Rao's Telugu Desam was the need of the hour. Even in an amorphous party like the Janata, there was dislike for 'central' involvement in party affairs and the conduct of the election campaign. No 'national' leader of the party campaigned in the State which was left totally to Biju Patnaik and rightly so. He raised the funds, distributed the party tickets, sometimes unwisely, and managed the campaign. He was looking more to N.T. Rama Rao in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh for help in swaying the Telugu voter than to the 'national' leadership of his party.

The same was the case in Karnataka. Hegde managed it all on his own as a regional leader. The Janata functionaries in Bangalore did not try to hide their unease when it was said that Morarji Desai might campaign for the party in the State and it was not merely because of Morarji's campaign style and other leadership qualities. The regionalisation of the polity is not merely because there are relative pigmies on the national stage while the States have thrown up comparative giants. The very logic of development is State-oriented, if not at lower level. Biju Patnaik puts it bluntly when he says that instead of 'wasting' his time in Delhi he would like to devote all his energy to the State. In fact, it is widely felt in Orissa that the State had made vast strides when he was in Bhubaneswar heading the State Government.

activity? Will the Congress(I) continue as a 'national' party? Not likely. First, the regional urge is infectious. Even in Andhra Pradesh where the Congress(I) leaders would rush to Delhi to consult Madam through Dhavan on every conceivable public activity — including their share of the money gorged from the public — the *netas* are now showing backbone. Anjaiah who had swallowed a public snub from Rajiv hardly three years ago now proclaims policy! Even allowing for the implicit tomfoolery, it is a sign of health. The only thing for which the State Congress(I) leaders whether in Andhra Pradesh or elsewhere look to the 'national' leadership is funds from the war chest raised by Indira Gandhi. Money may not always win an election but is nevertheless welcome. It can be invested in more profitable activities.

In States like Andhra Pradesh where the Congress(I) has been out of the Government and is thus constrained in its fund-raising operations, the dependence on the Centre is greater. But in a State like Orissa where Janaki Ballabh Patnaik is as resourceful as any other gold digger, the interest in the Centre is platonic. Even while cashing in on the sympathy factor on account of Indira Gandhi's assassination, the Congress(I) there fought the election at the local and regional level. For instance, the members of the former ruling families of Bolangir and Kalahindi could not have been overcome on a plank of national unity and indivisibility of India. The anti-feudal sentiment of the people was pressed into service to counter the still prevalent loyalty to the former ruling houses.

The only parties which assume a 'national' character, especially at election time, are those like Charan Singh's. He had wanted to set up a sizable number of candidates in States like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa, making exorbitant demands on them for the respective regional parties in the name of electoral adjustments. The candidates were either his personal admirers or those out to try their luck on his bandwagon because it might yield a winning seat. It suited them as well as Charan Singh because it enabled his party to become 'national'.

The woman voter

MADHU KISHWAR

IT is ironical that an increase in the numerical strength of women MPs in the Lok Sabha from 28 to 42 should have coincided with an all-time low of interest in women's issues during the elections. Few of the candidates made any specific mention of women's rights. Nor was any worked out programme for women mentioned in the electoral speeches of the Prime Minister and other Congress (I) leaders. This despite the fact that women flocked to their meetings as never before. The opposition too failed to bring women's issues to the fore, just as they failed in general to make this an issue and programme based election.

Even the routine formality of paying ritual homage and lip service to women's welfare was almost totally dispensed with this time. It is indeed surprising that, given the growing articulateness of women's groups, and the increasing interest in women's issues during the last decade, this election managed completely to bury women's concerns underneath the din of the chauvinist hysteria built up by the Congress(I).

As for the significance of the fact that a larger number of women candidates won elections, the less said the better. Ever since the country went in for a parliamentary system of government, we have seen that women who manage to get fielded as candidates by various

political parties are those connected to powerful male politicians as daughters, wives or sisters. Women who have built a political career on their own strength are very rare on the political scene, especially in electoral politics.

This is true not only of women who enter Parliament but even of those who get nominated to village panchayats. In fact, it would not be far fetched to say that had Indira Gandhi not been the only child of the first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, it is highly unlikely that she would have come to occupy important offices of power — first president of the Congress during Nehru's lifetime and then prime minister after his death.

All the women elected on Congress(I) tickets this time declared, in the most sycophantic manner, as did all the male Congress(I) MPs, that it was not their victory but that of their leader — Rajiv Gandhi. However, unlike the male candidates, women were not chosen because they represented any particular constituency but simply because of their family connections and their family's loyalty to the Gandhi family. Hitherto, most of the women MPs usually had some background of political activity through the national movement. Even if they happened to be wives or daughters of leading male politicians, some were also public figures in their own

right. But most of the new entrants lack such a background. The Congresswomen elected, in fact, display a remarkable ignorance on women's issues. Some like Vyjyanthimala cannot even address ordinary press conferences by themselves and constantly look to their husbands to answer the simplest of questions.

Among the women candidates put up by the opposition were a few who have a long record of active involvement with women's issues, both inside and outside Parliament. The most notable names are Pramila Dandavate (Janata Party), Geeta Mukherjee (CPI) and Sushila Gopalan (CPI-M). All three of them are wives of prominent male leaders but, unlike most other wives, they have done much more than merely act at the behest of their husbands. All of them play an active role in women's organisations as well as help in making their parties somewhat more receptive to women's issues. But Pramila Dandavate and Sushila Gopalan both lost this time although previously each had represented her constituency competently, and together were beginning to organise a women's lobby in Parliament.

The outcome of this election is a timely reminder that the number of women elected or appointed to top positions is a very inadequate way of gauging the political consciousness of women or their role in the political process. It is not enough that we have women candidates in larger numbers. It is far more important that they be committed to fighting for social justice for women and for other disadvantaged sections of society.

Most observers and commentators believe that women voters displayed great enthusiasm for the Congress (I) during the recent election, and that one of the reasons for the landslide victory of the Congress (I) is the heavy turnout of women voters in their favour. These impressions are based mainly on anecdotal accounts. Many journalists reported that women attended Congress (I) election meetings in unusually large numbers, especially those addressed by Rajiv Gandhi, and listened to him with rapt attention. There were

several newspaper stories of how women, in many regions and communities, went contrary to the political inclinations of their husbands, brothers and sons, and voted for the Congress (I).

In the absence of any systematic analysis of women's voting patterns, it is difficult to decipher how they voted. But I too feel that women did in fact display greater enthusiasm for the Congress (I). Even in my own neighbourhood and among my own acquaintances, I found a frightening fury in the sentiments expressed by the many pro-Congress women. With pro-Congress men, it was at least possible to engage in argument and discussion. But many of the women seemed so heated in their determination that there was no scope for discussion or debate. I also found much greater interest amongst women in political issues than I have observed in previous elections. They not only declared their sympathy and support for Congress (I) and Rajiv but would argue with an articulateness that was rather unusual considering that most women seldom express themselves at length on political issues.

Women who argued strongly in favour of the Congress (I) gave several interesting reasons for their support. The reasons heard most often were as follows:

(a) Rajiv lost his mother and needs everyone's sympathy and support;

(b) It is in the best Indian tradition not to let down a family that is mourning a death;

(c) Rajiv alone has a clean image;

(d) He is so good looking and carries himself with distinction. India needs such presentable leaders as its representatives abroad;

(e) He is young and will have the spirit and energy to clean up the administration;

(f) He alone can keep the nation united;

(g) Some even said that since he is such a good husband and father

he is sure to make a good prime minister.

The idea of a dutiful son come to finish the 'unfinished tasks' of his mother seems to have been very appealing to women. Moreover, in some ways he seems to represent a more acceptable ideal than did his mother. Even while they admired Indira Gandhi for her strength and capabilities, they also felt threatened by the idea of a woman in an office of power, especially since she had no male protector around. Ancient texts were often quoted to the effect that when a woman rules nothing but chaos can be expected because it is a reversal of the 'natural' order.

In the early years of her rule, many 'cast' aspersions on Indira Gandhi's personal life. Her being a widow was often a target of conservative attack. Much has been said about her appeal to women. While she was projected as a symbol of women's achievements and aspirations, I have often heard people ridiculing a strong, assertive woman by calling her a mini Indira Gandhi.

However, Rajiv Gandhi has a far greater traditional appeal. That is why there has been so much idealised display of his family life on television and in newspapers and magazines. One leading commercial women's magazine carried a cover story on India's 'new first lady' and 'first family'. It has all the right ingredients of an idyllic family set-up—a smart, educated, beautiful, fair and homeloving loyal wife who quietly stays in the background, two pretty looking children, one boy, one girl. It even fits in with family planning regulations and propaganda. The family presents a picture post card type of prettiness.

Ever since Rajiv came into the limelight, the media has obsessively been covering glimpses of his family life—how the wife is a perfect helpmate, has completely submerged herself in her husband's life, and assists him in his political career. She is presented as the epitome of wifely decorum and has been much extolled for being even more *pativrata* than most Hindu wives, on whom she has modelled herself.

This image is being presented with gusto and gratitude by the mass media. There is a sense of pride that the country can boast of a ruling family which can serve as a model of modern family life.

Women under normal circumstances, get far fewer opportunities to become involved in political processes, consequently they remain even more ignorant than do men about the ideological and other differences between various political parties.

One of the more important reasons for women's intense involvement was the way the Congress (I) managed to oversimplify the election issues in an unprecedented manner. It fought the election virtually on a one point programme as represented in its key slogan: 'Strengthen the Hand for Unity.'

The Congress(I) manipulated the voters, both men and women, into unthinking acquiescence. The crude slogans were effective. No scope was allowed for the slightest thought in these vague, global, menacing calls to defend the nation under the flag as waved by Rajiv Gandhi. Traditional electoral promises of concrete benefits got short shrift. Populist measures such as those contained in the 20 point programme were only featured in an almost mumbled undertone at rare intervals in the campaign. Contentless slogans were made to appear profound truths only because the dynamic heir repeated them countless times.

This time, the Congress(I) did not make the electorate go through the trouble of judging the worth of a candidate or vote for the party on the basis of its past performance. The voters were asked to vote for one man by virtue of his being the son of Indira Gandhi and his claim that he alone could ensure national unity. The voter was not expected to think about the implications of complicated political issues. They were expected to respond as though a button had been pushed in their heads.

This oversimplification was as successful with the educated middle and

upper middle class as it was with the illiterate and the poor. Everything and everybody who opposed the Congress(I) for whatever reason was dubbed anti-national or out to weaken the nation. Thus, all shades of opinion were made to give way to an oversimplified black and white picture with Congress(I) on the one hand standing for a strong united nation and all others portrayed as the forces of disintegration and separatism.

It is no wonder then that the electorate, especially women, found it easy to fall victim to this misrepresentation of the choices before them. For women, heeding such slogans is in a way an extension of the ideology that they have been brought up to conform to, even more than men. They are constantly taught to sacrifice their own interests to keep the family from breaking up. They are encouraged to accept humiliation and oppression and personal unhappiness in order that the family stay together. That is how women have for centuries been used as the chief preservers of the unity of the family even at their own cost.

The same authoritarian patriarchal ideology often asserts that the country is a big family in which all are brothers and sisters and the rulers are like parental figures whose business it is to keep everyone well behaved. The Congress(I) propaganda made extremely clever use of this traditional ideology. We were constantly reminded that Mother India — Indira Mata — had been killed. Further, she had shed her blood to keep this family of 750 million people together. Is it any surprise that women who have been taught to accept their own suffering as desirable in order to keep the family together should find the Congress(I) dynastic appeal so magical and easy to comprehend? Added to this was the fatal power of the family drama being staged day in and day out right in front of them on television. It began with Indira Gandhi's body being brought to Teen Murti house surrounded by the Gandhi family and its retainers. The picture of the bereaved son and the loyal *bahu* with her two children went on endlessly for days. Here was

India's own version of the royal family.

The government controlled media did its best to evoke not just sympathy but also fascination of the kind that is usually reserved for film stars playing religious heroes. This powerful emotional family drama was bound to go straight to the hearts of viewers. It also brought the issue closer to their concerns. One after another, various Congress(I) sycophants declared how they felt orphaned after the death of their great mother. The people were reminded again and again that an attack on this family was an attack on the larger family that is India. And so the son's hands should be strengthened. All this brought politics within easy grasp of the common people, especially of women, who are more deeply enmeshed in family ideology as a paradigm for politics.

Apart from the pious sentimental aspects, this appeal had its more deadly and bloody aspects too — those of hatred and revenge on those who had violated the sanctity of the family. The slogan '*Khun ka badla khun se lenge*' was not televised by an oversight. While women were encouraged to shed tears and cast their votes, for men there was a more militant message: '*Indiraji ki antim iccha, bund bund se desh ki raksha*.' The nation demanded blood and as is invariably the case with chauvinists, Congressmen preferred to shed the blood of others rather than their own. And those who were not privileged enough to shed the blood of others were asked to use their votes as weapons in a comparable fury. 'Do not only defeat but wipe out the opposition', was the message that Rajiv Gandhi carried to the electorate.

Voters were asked: 'Do you want the country's border to be shifted to your doorstep' and warned that if the Congress(I) was not returned to power, their shopping lists would have to include acid bulbs and deadly weapons in order to defend their own families from attack by anti-national elements. This kind of hatred soaked propaganda consolidated both the latent and the blatant communal forces behind the Congress(I). On the other hand, it was a

threat to the Sikh community. It implied that unless the 'national' government was given the power to repress the minorities, the Hindus would end up having to risk their lives in a virtual civil war against the Sikh minority, among others.

Not just in India, but the world over, women tend to be more against war, bloodshed and violence than men. The vision of violence and warfare within India played on the fears evoked by the riots. The skilful propaganda machinery kept the voters from comprehending that the ruling party had itself been primarily responsible for the violence and communal tension. But what is most important, the voters were made to forget the everyday atmosphere of fear in which they live.

For most women in this country, violence within the family, such as beating by husbands, is a far more immediate threat. Women in many parts of the country are afraid to step out of home after dark for fear of violence, usually from men of their own village or neighbourhood. For millions of women, the sexual harassment and violence they encounter at the workplace is far more of a threat. And yet women's concern for their everyday safety was cleverly manipulated to give way to a mythical safety of the nation. For instance, this is how a young woman explained her support of the Congress(I): 'With him as Prime Minister, I feel so safe.'

Similar sentiments were expressed in different ways by many other women. When questioned whether they felt that the roads had become safer for women or whether they no longer felt afraid to be alone outside the house after dark, all of them answered in the negative. Nor did they expect that men would stop beating their wives or people stop burning their daughters-in-law after Rajiv's becoming prime minister.

They did not think that sexual harassment and violence which millions of women have to deal with everyday at places of work would be curbed. Yet, these are the most debilitating forms of insecurity for most women. So what is the feeling of safety linked to? It was

clear that women's concern for peace, for their own and their families' physical safety was cleverly manipulated by substituting the vague idea of the country being made more 'safe'.

Several commentators have remarked that this time the voters transcended caste, community and regional sentiments more than they did in any other election. They voted for the Congress(I) because it claimed to stand for national unity. Most people have described this as a positive phenomenon. Is it really all that positive considering that the call for national unity was essentially a call for communal hatred and mistrust of the minorities?

The Congress propaganda appealed to the basest instincts of hatred and fear in the people, especially the Hindus. And yet it was smart enough to project its vicious campaign as noble and positive. Most voters seem to have felt larger than their real selves when they cast their votes to strengthen the hands of Rajivji. They were made to feel that they were voting for some noble ideal and were rising to the occasion by transcending their so-called 'narrow' concerns. They rose to defend the nation's unity even if that unity was to be achieved by burning people alive.

The Congress(I) as the preserver of national unity seems absurd considering that its way of bringing about unity and security is to keep different regional groups quarrelling with each other so that its repressive and inept policies begin to appear as the doings of a strong government. It is indeed remarkable that even though the Congress Party has done nothing effective in all these decades to protect the interests of vulnerable minorities such as harijans and Muslims, it manages to pretend successfully that it is the only force that stands as a bulwark between them and disaster.

Thus, the Congress(I) managed to distort the positive sentiments of voters, women and men, in favour of its own authoritarian politics. Normally, when people express a desire for unity, what they essentially mean is that different groups of people in a given society should live in peace and harmony with each

other. This humane desire forms the very basis of a certain minimum social equilibrium. Most people would ordinarily rather be left in peace than get involved in warfare and bloodshed. However, when governments and a certain kind of politician talk in hyperbolic terms of threats to national unity, it is usually in preparation for violent internal repression of the minorities and eventually the whole population.

Most of those who talk of a strong nation, see Muslims and now Sikhs as a hindrance to the achievement of that ideal. It is no coincidence that, apart from the threat from the Sikhs, Rajiv Gandhi keeps harping on the threat from Pakistan. Anyone who knows even the elementary facts of Indo-Pak politics knows that Pakistan is in no position to pose a military threat to India since India's military might is far ahead of that of its neighbours. Why then this constant bogey of Pakistan? If one observes the political impact within India, one can see the real purpose of Congress(I) propaganda against Pakistan. It has become an effective vote gathering technique.

Every time this theme is played, we have witnessed in the past that both Hindus and Sikhs would openly express the sentiment that the Muslims of India should be forced to go to Pakistan. Every Muslim begins to be seen as a Pakistani spy and the relations between Muslims and non Muslims begin to deteriorate. Hindus begin to raise more and more chauvinistic demands and ask that a strong government keep minorities under control. It is no coincidence that soon after the Congress victory was announced, one heard large crowds in Delhi shouting slogans such as '*Hindu Ekta Zinda-bad*' as part of the celebrations.

Thus, at its worst, the vote for the Congress(I) was a vote to strengthen an authoritarian and repressive rule. Aggressive chauvinism invariably results in greater repression. At its best, it was a vote for a myth — the myth that the country is composed of an undifferentiated mass of people, all of whom have identical interests. It is indeed a myth to believe that in all important instances, the interests of peasants can

be the same as those of government bureaucrats, the interests of urban workers the same as those of unorganised agricultural labourers, the interests of industrialists the same as those of consumers, and the economic interests of women identical with those of men.

This myth tries to get people to believe that besides being Indian nationals, they have no other competing identities. And even if they do have other interests, they should sacrifice them unconditionally and arbitrarily for the interests of the nation as defined by the rulers. Thus, in the final analysis, this vote for national unity as presented by the Congress(I) was a vote against people's own welfare and for the benefit of the ruling party alone.

It is only a mischievous myth maker who would have us believe that the unity of any country's people depends on the ability to use violence and threats. Even though the slogan was 'national unity,' its real meaning was the instalment in power of strong leaders and of a government which has the means to use unrestrained coercion and violence against any section of the people to force them into submission. The government pretends that it will use this power only against those who do wrong, but it is invariably the ruling group who decides arbitrarily, in its own interest, who is to be dubbed betrayer of national interests.

However, despite the Congress (I)'s massive manipulation of the people, nevertheless they have desperately once again voted for hope and for change. Right now everyone is expecting Rajiv Gandhi to solve the various problems which he has inherited from his mother's regime. The Sikhs are waiting for him to make the right moves on the Punjab issue, the Assamese are hoping he will untangle the old stalemate, the Kashmiris are hoping that he will undo the wrongs done to the State, people all over the country are hoping he will eliminate corruption from the government machinery and help create an efficient and effective administration.

All previous elections too have likewise reflected these hopes in

voting for whichever political party seemed more capable than others of bringing home desperately needed changes. This is especially true for the last three elections.

But people have been disappointed time and again and there is a growing mood of frustration running parallel to the repeated expression of hope. The frustration results from a basic dilemma inherent in our system of government. If the rulers choose not to honour their promises there is very little that people can do to make the government machinery respond to their needs and aspirations. Moreover, very little is dependent on the subjective intentions of the rulers. In our obsession for seeking strong leaders we tend to forget that the State machinery over which they are presiding is inherently authoritarian. It is meant to control and subjugate people and not really designed to serve them. It is characterized by a near total lack of accountability to people, no matter what the rhetoric used by those in power.

It is this which allows our political leaders and government functionaries to persist in policies which may be disastrous for people, without having to consult them and gain their approval. This has bred its own kind of servility in the minds of people. We are constantly looking for powerful leaders who can set the wrongs right and desperately hoping that the men at the top will turn out to be decent and responsible persons. We are frustrated again and again and yet the search for a miracle worker continues.

The existing political parties only have one item on their agenda, and that is which of them is to take control over the existing machinery. But what we need is a new agenda which emphasizes the need to make the government machinery truly responsive to the people rather than the present system whereby every functionary is responsible only to his superior and eventually to the person at the top. We have to work out ways whereby no matter who the people are who gain power, even if they are not capable of doing much good, at least their ability to do harm should be limited. Even if they

don't want to enable people to have a better life, at least they shouldn't have the power to thwart people from finding their own solutions.

The task of changing the State structures in order to make them more responsive to the needs and aspirations of common people needs to start with the most primary unit of social organization—the family. The hierarchical relations of dominance and submission within the family are an important breeding ground for the ideology of authoritarian functioning that characterizes the State machinery. Just as it is assumed that decision making rights should be vested in the male head of the family, and that any say in family affairs that others have is only what he permits at his discretion, so it is assumed that for the good functioning of society what we need are strong leaders running the State machinery who act in the tradition of powerful patriarchs and keep the population under control.

The control is made possible because just as the male head of the family controls the economic resources of the family and most of its decision making, so does the all powerful State control the people. That is why we are always clamouring for strong governments. Thus, the ideology of control from above and submission from below has come to characterize all aspects of our social and political life. We are taught to look for benevolent patriarchs for justice rather than evolve structures which emphasize mutual responsibility and an equitable sharing of power, which make it possible for people to have greater power over their own lives rather than seeking power over the lives of others.

So far we have only been taught to expect and demand that those who have power use it with restraint and benevolently. That has not worked either in the family or vis a vis the State machinery because abuse is inherent in a situation of unchecked power. Therefore, we need to go beyond the search for the right candidates who make tall claims about what they will do for us and set out to do the necessary ourselves through our own strength and self organization.

Books

ELECTIONS IN INDIA: Data Handbook on Lok Sabha Elections 1952-80 by V.B. Singh and Shankar Bose. New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1984.

A boon for all students of political science as well as commentators, this *Handbook* gives all the data required within some 634 pages. It is carefully produced and the material systematically presented for any comparative analysis. The book is definitely a must for all serious scholars of the Indian political scene.

POLITICAL DYNAMICS OF PUNJAB edited by Paul Wallace and Surendra Chopra. Amritsar, Guru Nanak Dev University, 1981.

OURS is an age of nationalist passions. Both ancient and modern unities are threatened the world over. In India we too have witnessed the constant ebb and flow of religio-ethnic energy and politics between different strata of society, denominational and ethnic groups, and of secular ideologies. The real constant seems to be not so much a certain content as certain tensions and processes. The ability and eagerness of the common man to assimilate new experiences gives these movements their emotive dynamism and immobilises, or so it seems, academic thinking to penetrate beyond the manifest.

These comments are provoked by the Wallace and Chopra volume on Punjab politics. As with most

edited symposia, it is easier to say what it says than what it does not. What it says can be summed up as: antecedents and growth of Sikh organisations in Punjab, narrow divide between the secular and the ecclesiastical, electoral dynamics at micro and macro levels, social and economic interface, and directions taken by two interest groups, namely, the labour and the students. These pieces are valuable in one way or another, but none of them transcend beyond describing the existing situation from various perspectives. There is ample respect for facts and concern with 'truth', so is the concern with the realities of power, at least at endogenous level, but the volume fails at getting to the roots of the heavy malaise which envelops Punjab today.

There is little in this sort of book that is likely to arouse much disagreement. The general thrust is as follows: the Akali Dal can neither break with the past nor snap its linkages with the SGPC, nor can it impose totalitarian discipline on its sprawling agrarian constituencies. In the domain of Gurdwara politics it has to project itself as a champion of Sikh sectarian interests and at the level of State politics it has to project itself as a non-sectarian champion of the interests of Punjab and the Punjabis. The working out of this dialectic is what is believed to be the political dynamics of Punjab.

Indeed, the connection must be made, but does the question end with establishing the connection, or is Punjab (or, for that matter, Assam) a pointer to India's cracking up? The answer of assembled

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authors here is: no, of course not. But there are signs and portents. Punjab and Assam are mere symptoms rather than causes. If the mass movements of the past few years are any guide, then the rapid erosion of bonds that unite a plural society like India cannot be denied. The threat does not come so much from these movements, even if attributed to scapegoats and external conspiracies, as from the response of the State thereto.

For those who run the State (the Centralizers), taming of the provinces is seen as vital for the survival of the State and for the fulfilment of the destiny of India as a powerful nation. In this process, the provincial sentiment is hurt and masses are mobilised to recapture lost political spaces.

It is in this context that the bravura of Anandpur Sahib Resolution has to be seen. At one level, it is a declaration of distinctiveness of Sikh identity which, the Sikh leadership feels, is in danger of being squeezed under the pressure of its Hindu roots and also swamped by modernization in which the community finds itself caught. At another level, it is being used by the Akalis both as a counter and a lever to mobilize the Sikh masses for opening up political spaces that they think are denied to them. Creating and sustaining new movements in a rapidly centralising State like India is not easy.

The Resolution is not only a manifesto of a protest movement through which Akalis seek to wrest power in the province on their own terms but also an instrument to safeguard the distinctive identity of the Sikhs. It is important to remember that Longowal and Bhindranwale rose to prominence with the loss of electoral support of the Akalis, their programmatic failure, their in-fighting, frustration and defeat. Their response has been the arousal of Sikh consciousness, rhetorical violence, and intensification of unity moves among various factions.

By and large, the moderate leadership of the Akalis has led the movement by the rules of the game that prevailed until the seventies. They did not expect the Centre to be so insensitive to certain genuine demands of autonomy. A long stalemate was the last thing they expected, which is what made them captives of the extremists and opened up possibilities of militants overtaking the movement. A stalemate until the elections suited the strategy of the centralizers, for it escalated violent vocabulary and gestures. It helped them to wean Hindu support in much of north India which was anguished by the acts and words of the extremists. The Hindu backlash was another story altogether. The moderate Akalis cannot disown the extremists without appearing to be foolish and even treacherous in the eyes of the Sikh masses, despite the fact that neither the masses nor the moderate leadership want to contract out of the Indian federation.

A striking thing about the Akali movement is its spontaneity and the Sikhs' sense of moral right. The sense of grievance runs deep. On the one hand, they

get a government which they cannot call their own and, at the other, they feel at the short end of every stick. However, the genuineness of Akali demands got hazy in the declamatory fog of the Akalis, necessitated by the extremists whose swelling numbers were a consequence of the long stalemate.

If the provincial autonomy movements and demands made by a section of the opposition as well as by several grassroot groups for establishing a genuinely decentralised polity that can overcome the distintegrative features of a centralising polity can come through, these would mark a watershed in the growth of the Indian polity. On the other hand, if the dialogue on autonomy and large political arrangements by which our affairs are to be managed is stifled, and the values of community specificities are ignored, we may enter a period of growing resistance against forced penetration of the Centre—a tryst with destiny where assault rather than gentle wooing is the dominant scenario.

The academics in the volume under review overtly as well as implicitly endorse the myth of a model which is a facade for unilateral dictation by the centralizers. And, myths die slowly. It is time that the anguished call of broken communities is understood, and commitments to primordial communities are intertwined with commitments to national entity that are finely woven into a combination of commitments. Or else we may succumb to a cycle of drift and repression.

R.K. Srivastava

PUNJAB CRISIS: Context and Trends by Pramod Kumar, Manmohan Sharma, Atul Sood, and Ashwanl Handa. Chandigarh, C.R.R.I.D. Publications, March 1984.

THE Punjab crisis may appear to have features similar to crises that the nation has faced several times in the past. But, this doesn't detract from the fact that its complexity and nuances are still largely misunderstood. Any published work on the Punjab crisis will necessarily be influenced at the present moment by happenings in the very recent past. However, it is obvious that working towards a long term solution requires much by way of understanding and information. The book under review is an effort to give both facts and figures that can be of use to any sensible study of the crisis that Punjab is facing at the moment.

Communalism is one big focal area. Bipan Chandra in his preface agrees with the importance given to this factor. He says, 'This study defines communalism in a scientific manner and then identifies the three kinds of communalism—the conformist, the secessionist and the incremental-concessionist—that have surfaced in Punjab, sometimes separately and at other times in unison. While taking full note of the fact that communalism is the pro-

duct of specific socio-economic and political circumstances and gives expression to actual, real social discontent which has failed to find a legitimate outlet in healthy protest movements, the authors point out that communalism fails to provide a correct understanding of, or socially relevant and viable remedies to, the social conditions which generate it. Instead, communalism undermines the real struggles for changing the social conditions. Consequently, communalism becomes a political and ideological instrument in the hands of vested interests to maintain their dominant position.'

Economics is not ignored either. Details abound. The authors have also woven together a complex set of facts drawn from political, sociological and economic features of the region. The wealth of tables seem useful since they have been brought together within an analytical framework. The ways in which communal factors have been exploited, how regional differences have been accentuated and how a politics of convenience has ruined the situation is made fairly clear. Being able to isolate the critical issues and moving towards a level-headed examination of solutions that are feasible is something the book under review attempts.

Saying that 'a long term strategy should be formulated even at the expense of foregoing short term electoral or other gains' sounds like advice that will go unheeded. In advocating such an approach the authors ignore reality in a manner that could well be an oversimplification of that reality.

Notwithstanding such shortcomings, this book, like several others, will provide analysts of the subject with some more valuable data. The long bibliography which the authors have put together will be of use to all serious scholars of the subject. The new initiatives promised on this front by the new government will perhaps be analysed better by those who do their home-work right. This book may help.

D. Cherian

DEMOCRATIC POLITICS IN INDIA (Second Edition) by K.L. Kamal. Wiley Eastern Ltd., 1984.

THE book is an abridged version of an earlier joint effort by K.L. Kamal and Professor Meyer in 1977. Kamal's effort this time round is to bring the recent changes in the nation's polity into the ambit of his work. Consequently, he covers the changes that have been brought about as a result of the defeat of the Congress which had held unquestioned power for long. He also explores the nature of the relationship between parties as they evolved in the post-Janata phase.

42 The democratic politics of India in terms of power equations and their use is also discussed. As Kamal defines it, 'Politics involves power. Power is always used as a means and sometimes an end in itself.'

There is a lengthy discussion of the social structure and the political heritage of the country. The role of the British, the evolution of provincial tendencies, the increased importance of Muslim power etc., are described in some detail.

The book is useful as a kind of chronological study of the dominance of the Congress Party in Indian politics. However, one feeling is that the author has a tendency to over-simplify. But, despite this failing there are details that will be of interest to students of Indian politics.

Inevitably, Kamal focusses on the evolution of politics within the Congress fold. The dramatic personae are familiar but there is little except narration here. However, what is interesting is the discussion of how splinters within the party and without have time and time again influenced events on the larger canvas of the country. Kamal uses an analysis of election seats in a manner that is today in vogue to establish patterns of voting. There are long and detailed descriptions of local elections too. These are used to analyse local trends — which may be of interest to observers of the impending State elections.

Among the major factors that the author considers as a feature of power politics is big business. But, except for the well-known association of several industrialists with the leaders of the freedom movement, the role that money power has played in their continued influence is unexplained. Old associations with old leaders had at one time formed the basic influence base of industrialists. This has been eroded over time and new factors are emerging. A detailed discussion of this would have been of great use. Where the author theorises in terms of the role of big business, evidence seems scanty and more rigorous work would perhaps have yielded better results.

The author's thesis about the pyramid of power and the ranking within verges on the naive, believable only within a simplistic scenario. The reality is vastly different. In the context of the present state of Indian politics, several of Kamal's hypotheses seem fragile. But then, perhaps, we are too close to the facts at the moment and, maybe, historical studies of this kind have their own value amidst all the other studies that are undertaken.

R. Raghavan

SPLIT IN A PREDOMINANT PARTY—The Indian National Congress in 1969 by M.P. Singh. Abhinav Publications, 1981.

CENTRE-STATE RELATIONS by Sati Sahni. Delhi, Vikas, 1984.

IN a static framework, the split of 1969 was perhaps the most decisive one that the Congress Party had faced in its 100 years of existence. In his book, a reprint of his doctoral thesis, Mahendra Prasad Singh

tries to analyse the reasons for this split and its possible implications for future party performance. He first focuses at macro-level, on the conceptual framework in which to analyse the cohesiveness (or the lack of it) in the party. The second perspective focuses at the micro-level and seeks to analyse the various pressures on the decision of the Congress segments to align with one another.

This exhaustive work credits to itself a great deal of intellectual rationalisation. The fundamental framework in which the split is analysed boils down to three major factors — the intra-party elite conflicts, social mobilisation in a larger society and the nature of the party system which made this split inherent to the system.

Moving the focus of analysis to the micro-level, Singh develops a paradigm of factional identification in order to facilitate the analysis. The paradigm basically postulates two sets of independent variables — the personal background variables of the MPs and the district characteristics. The former are conceived as sources of the more immediate socialising influences and the latter against the broader context of socialisation.

The theme developed with great difficulty on an analytical scale suffers, however, from the lack of quantification. The author in his preface remarks that a certain amount of correlation/factor analysis was done but has not been included in the book. Nevertheless, the book can be considered essential reading for any student of politics.

The second book is essentially a compilation of the three day Seminar at Srinagar — (which was dubbed as the Srinagar Declaration of 1983) Sahni has suffered on two counts. A logical arrangement of the chapters could have provided more intellectual continuity. Secondly, Sahni has forgotten his role as editor, and many of the chapters instead of being reproduced verbatim could have been condensed.

The subject of Centre-State relations by itself is not new. The Constituent Assembly showed great foresight in trying to combine federalism with a strong central rule, although it is true that in the recent years the balance of power has often been tilted. A fresh look at the division of powers could have yielded more fruitful results rather than simple expositions of political manifestos that have been disguised in intellectual verbosity which most chapters expose. Notable in this are the expositions of the Republican Party of India and the Forward Bloc. However, the points raised by Jyoti Basu and N.T. Rama Rao stand out on their own merit.

The formal declaration as such seems to be a hurriedly drafted affair, and leans more towards being anti-establishment than being an intellectual reformulation. On the whole the book is of little use as intellectual fodder.

A. Prasad

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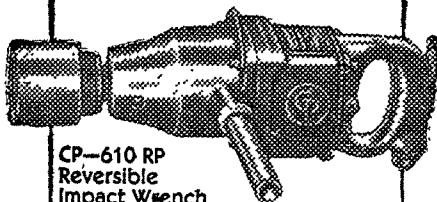
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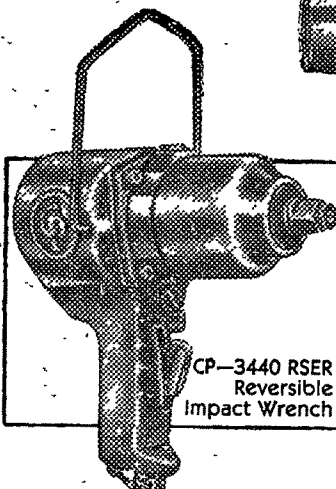
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144	1971 Election	August 1971
153	State Elections	May 1972
159	Clean Elections	November 1972
212	The Elections	April 1977
241	The Election Business	September 1979.

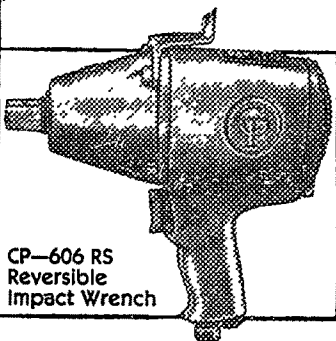
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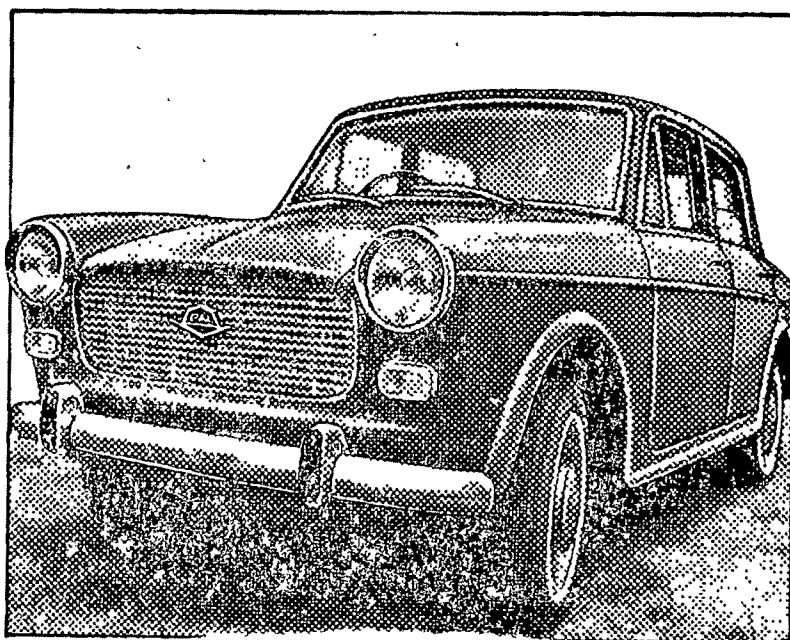
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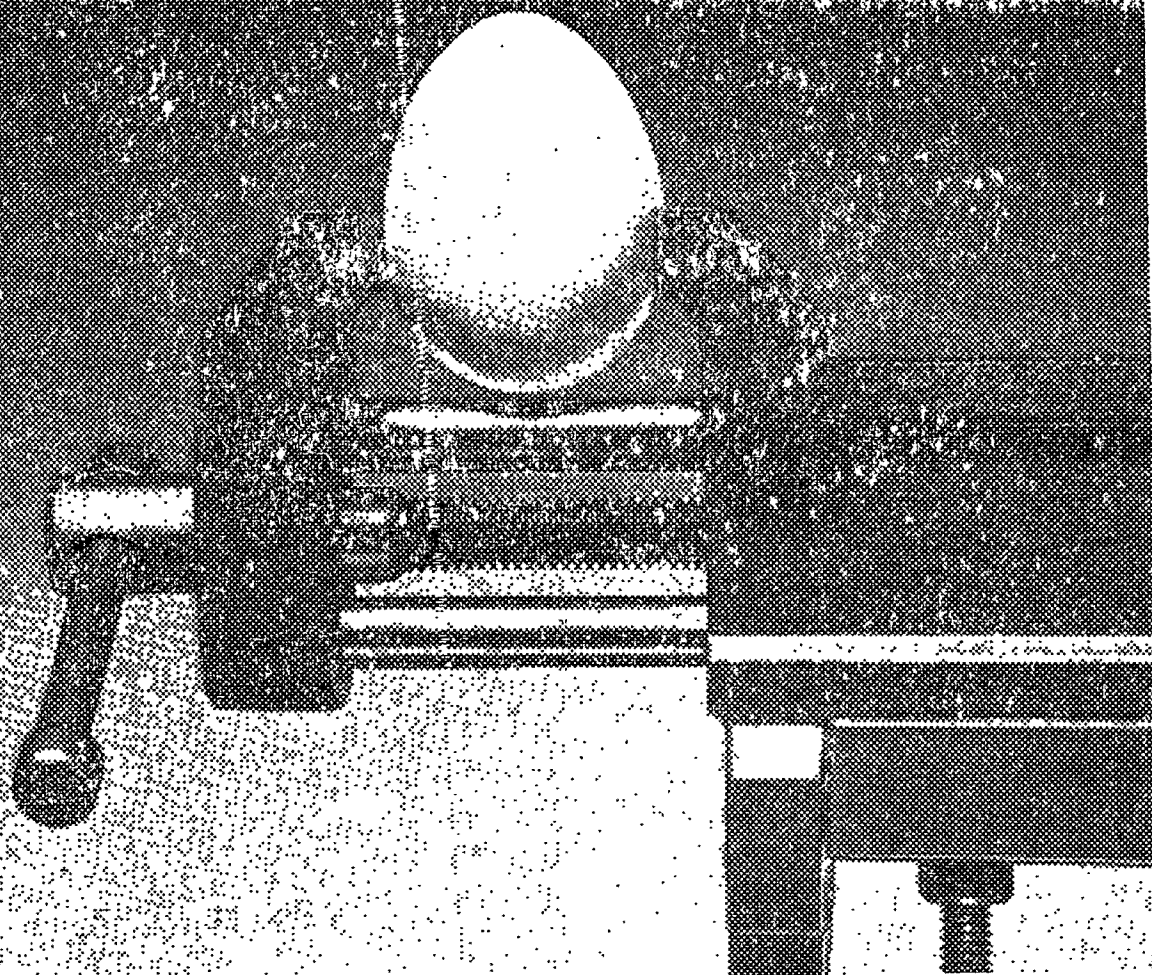
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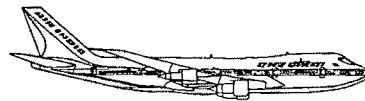
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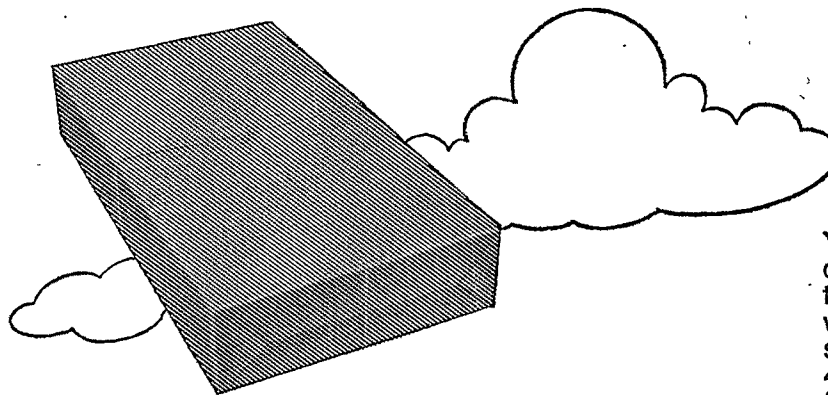
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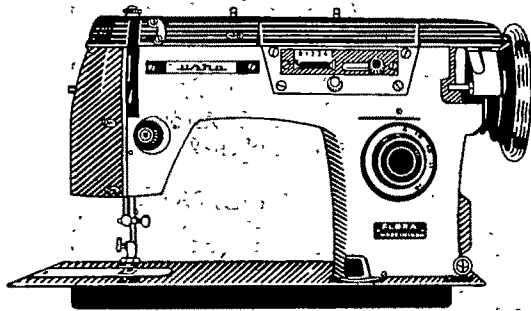
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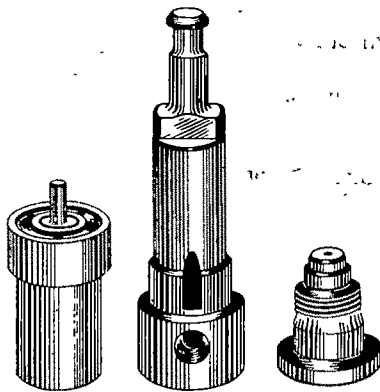
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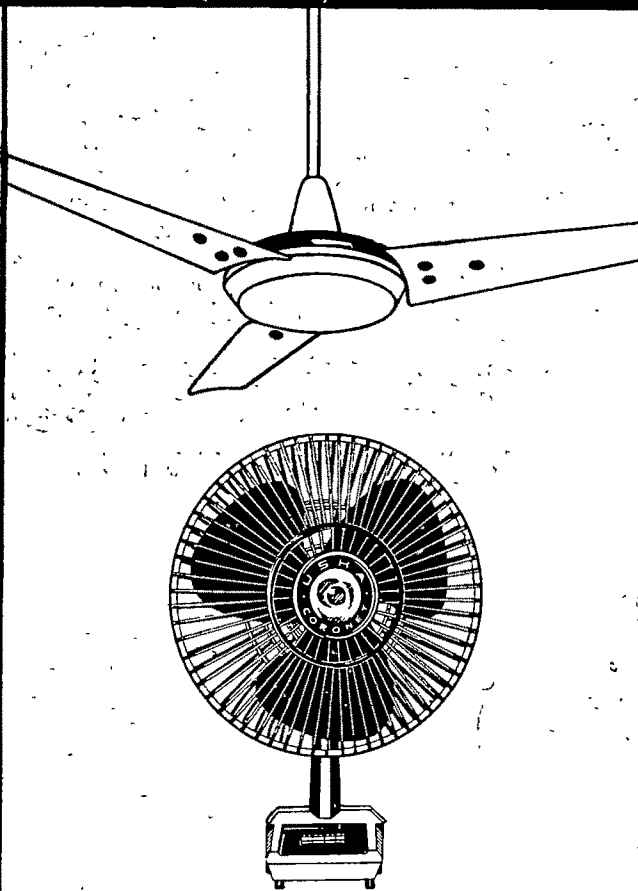
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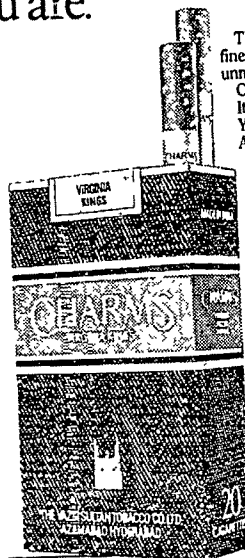


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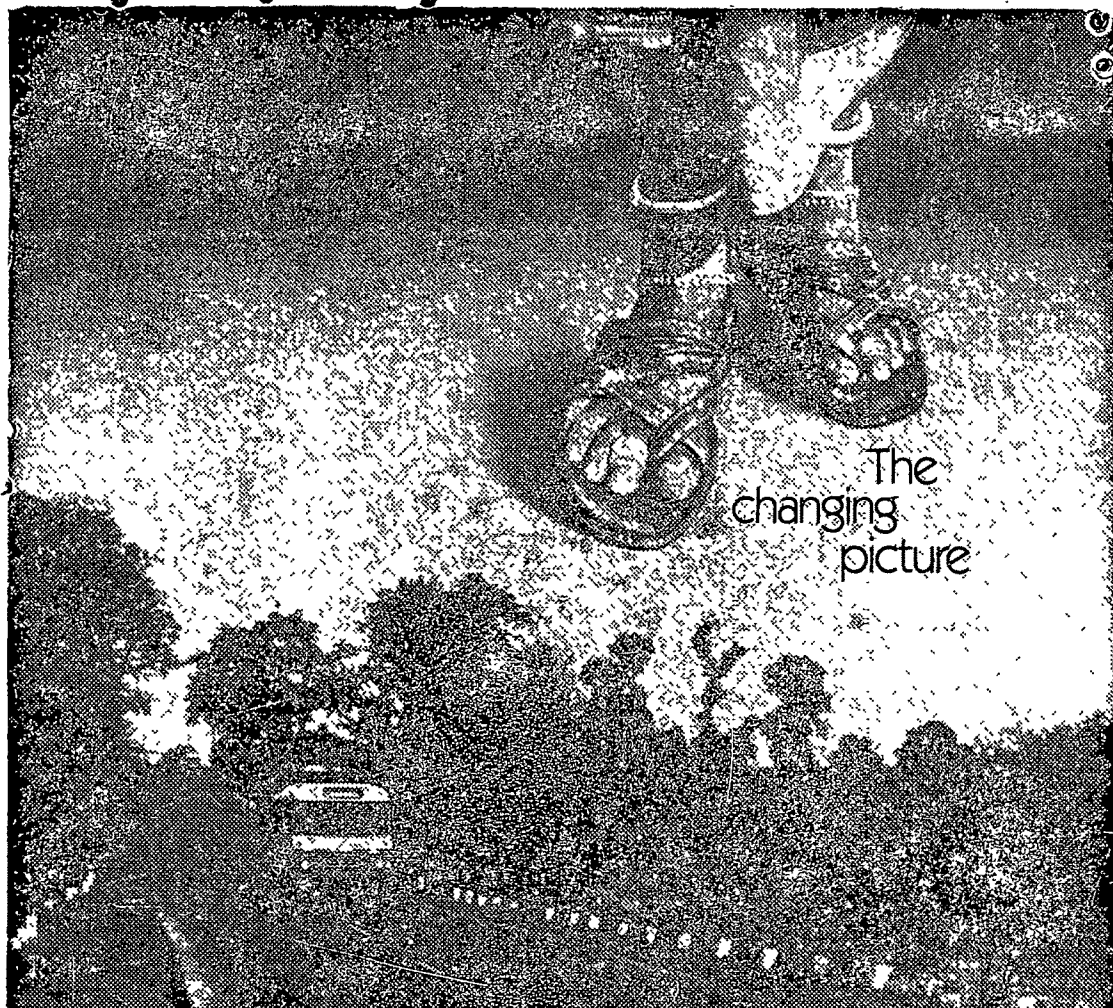
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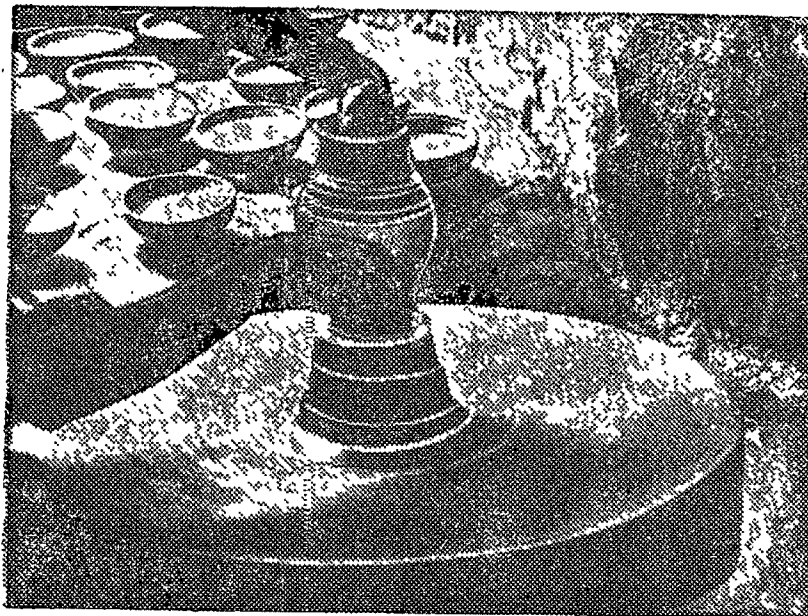
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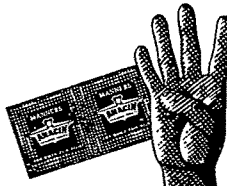
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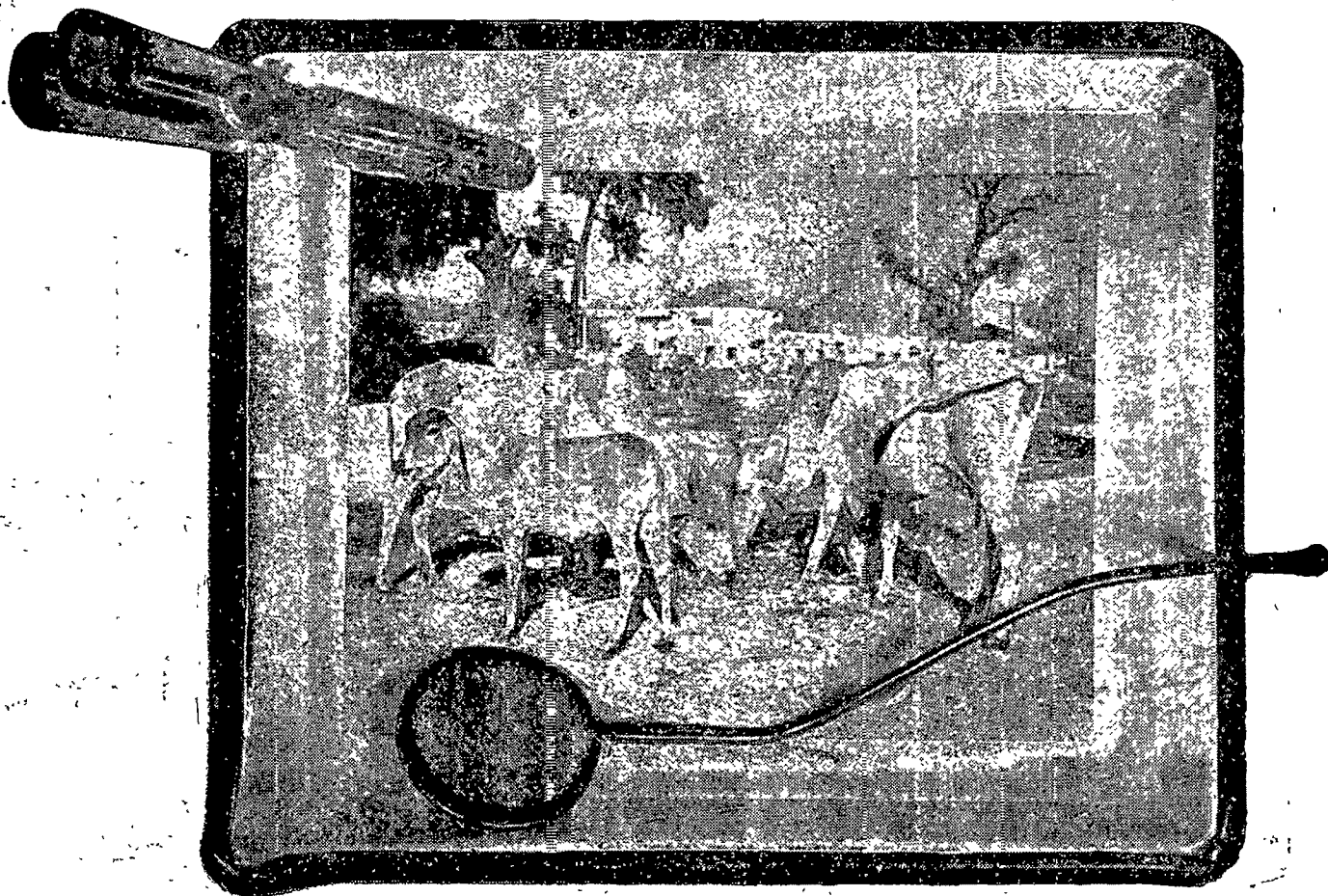


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That is Karnataka, its hospitality to others. Spontaneous, ungrudging and tolerant. Perhaps this tolerance and integration is a result of history. Chalukyas, Kadambas, Rashtrakutas, Gangas, Hoysalas, Mauryas and the Rayas have all come and gone and left behind the richness of their cultures. Later, it was the Muslims in Bijapur, the Christians in Mangalore who added their flavour to this melting pot of cultures.

The psyche of the people has been moulded by centuries of thinkers producing a State full of poets, philosophers, bankers and entrepreneurs.

With the awakening of nationalism in the late 19th century, which spread throughout the country, it was inevitable that this would give rise to local patriotism. From Tippu Sultan and Rani Chennamma to modern freedom fighters, Karnataka has through its various leaders, Hindu, Muslim and Christian, played its part in the struggle for freedom and produced more than its share of freedom fighters.

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The problem

THE history of politics in India is a story of a tragedy that began in hope. The modern secularist welfare State was an act of trust. Implanted into an old culture, it reflected the dynamic interaction of the western world and a reawakened India. Politics was to be the binding mechanism, which would help resolve conflicts in a society full of diversity. The genius of the first two decades lay in the ability to create a new model of nation building based on a spectrum of institutions which could channelize individual drives and ambitions at various levels.

This included a unique party system, a rule bound administrative and judicial structure, a planning machinery, an impressive range of voluntary institutions from the village up to the regional and national levels. Without ever being formalized, they were based upon an ethic of service and cooperation, of adjustment and compromise. They reflected an authenticity both of individuals and institutions. Binding it all was the legacy of Gandhi, Nehru and the Indian National Congress.

As a result, the Indian State which began as a hypothesis became a fact. It was fluid, it realized the uses of disorder. It saw differences — ethnic, linguistic, ideological — not as something to be suppressed, but as something to be managed creatively. The centre was vital because the margins retained a sense of autonomy.

The first two decades gave rise to a veritable order — not the order of an imposed homogeneity and standardization, but one that drew its strength and its depth from diversities and a continuous dialogue among them. It was a celebration of politics as difference. The story of the third decade is an obituary of the earlier era. What we confront today is not the crisis of politics but its virtual elimination.

The last decade has marked the beginning of an Indian State which has deprived society of a basic consensus and closed the scope for dialogue. The violence, the fear, the repression, the rhetoric of deceit and doublespeak, are symptoms not of crisis but of the end of healthy politics.

At the very beginning we confront an essential paradox. The Indian State which grew out of the violence of a communal Partition was conceived in a secular manner. The politician and the party were assigned significant roles in controlling communal forces, in modifying and localizing them. Communalism as a formal ideology was a marginal phenomenon restricted to marginal groups. Yet, today, communalism has paradoxically become the child of the secular politics.

The logic of this paradox can be understood by unravelling the nature of electoral politics, which has introduced into the social fabric a reign of quantity over quality. The logic of numbers became the logic of survival, a numbers game all along. An electoral majority constituted the sole basis of power. To ensure that, there was a frenzied search for money with which to pay for the increasingly elaborate campaigns. Such calculations emptied politics of its ideological content. Yet, despite large majorities there was a desperate insecurity, a sense of continuous anxiety. It was to the credit of Indira Gandhi that she introduced the problem of poverty into the public concern. Unfortunately, instead of becoming an ideological issue, it became a rhetorical one.

The Congress (I) inaugurated the destruction of the old institutions but failed to replace them with new institutions which could inaugurate the process of transformation. We were left with no institutional buffers between leadership and the masses, no real hierarchy of party organisation to encourage debate

and negotiation. Politics became a direct electoral appeal to the masses. Elections became an end in themselves, a desperate struggle for survival of the ruling coterie.

The retreat from poverty as a political issue had produced an erosion in the traditional support base of the party among minorities, tribals and the poor. The new social base for the party in power became the Hindu majority and the Congress played on the fears of this new 'hurt' majority. The base of the Congress retreated to the communal heartland of Hindu India. The logic of electoral politics had transformed a secular party into a communally based one.

The transformation of an organic polity into a mechanical electoral system has been accompanied by an even more frightening trend — the criminalization of the modern State. If the first grid reflects a narrowing of politics, the second reflects an even greater loss of autonomy — the hijacking of the State by criminal elements. This is rooted in the desperate need to stay in office. It is a combination of two processes — the use of gangsterism as a substitute for party organisation and the complete permeation of the State by money power.

The new infrastructure of politics consists not of grassroot individuals sensitive to local context, but of musclemen and local mafias. These are either directly paid for, or are maintained by and thrive on the new, high-growth sector of the Indian economy — the combination of liquor kings, smugglers and fast buck politicians.

The recovery of politics demands a return to institution-building and a belief that personalities cannot usurp the place of institutions. It holds that violence and brutality are a negation of politics. It follows

that even a minimal programme of political recovery and institution-building must be sensitive to the varied grass roots movements that have mushroomed all over the country.

Essential to the recognition of such a grass roots style is the necessity of decentralization both in the governance of the country and in decision-making. This is the only way to ensure the integrity of the country and the well-being of the people, as well as the full participation of diverse communities and regions in the national endeavour. It will require major and drastic electoral reforms at every level, and a viable and strict separation of money from political campaigning.

The crux of a decentralised, democratic society is a high degree of self-governance at various levels and in diverse sectors and segments of society. The Indian people have, even though obliquely, expressed a yearning for this. All that is needed to galvanise this creative urge of the people is to restructure the relationship between the State and the social order. And to remember that the Indian social order cannot stand the strain of centralised politics.

Certainly, the political, economic and social fabric needs urgent repair. Issues need to be discussed anew, directions set, directions which catch the forgotten and deprived half of this country by the hand and take them forward. Without this there can be no talk of bursting into the twenty first century.

The population boom has made the country younger, a new generation is taking over, a generation perhaps unaware of the original theorizing behind the structures we set up. This issue of *Seminar* is an attempt at refocussing on some of those structures and what needs to be done.

Our coterie politics

ROMESH THAPAR

WHERE should one begin when discussing the many intertwined crises of the Indian political scene? We all know that the battered system needs drastic overhaul to cope with a new set of challenges. Election procedures need reforming, the State has to take over the bulk of funding to curb the political influence of black money, political parties with understandable and alternative programmes have to return us to intelligent debate, various damaged norms of probity and accountability in political office have to be restructured,

and governance has to become more than a dynastic titillation based very often on criminal, lumpen and communalised elements. May be, we will have to turn to models based on proportional representation to avoid the inherent distortions of the Westminster model.

These issues have been widely discussed and constitute the foundation of healthy democratic functioning. Their elaboration and acceptance would provide the broad framework within which to function. Here, we

are basically silent and unchanging. And, so, the political thrust gets caught, not on shaping alternatives, but on peripheral reforms and confrontations from day to day in the hope that entrenched political interests will be softened and made to change. They do not, for they are an essential element of current populism.

Unfortunately, viewing the years since the return of an embittered Indira Gandhi to power in 1980, and the perspectives offered by her son, Rajiv, it is only possible to see the crises intensifying despite the attempt to cover them up or to push them into this or that corner for dressing up or mutation. Every emerging problem is so treated, and this is the rather obvious and heavy make-up of the nation today. It cannot hide the blemishes developing into ugly warts.

The aftermath of Indira Gandhi's assassination which saw a near genocidal attack on the Sikh communities in the North, and left some 2700 dead (the reliable unofficial figure is twice this) has yet to be the subject of a properly constituted enquiry. In its absence, the carefully collated and damning indictment of the ruling politicians, bureaucrats and police contained in the joint report of the People's Union of Civil Liberties and the People's Union for Democratic Rights — and powerfully confirmed by the preliminary findings of the five-member Citizen's Commission headed by former Chief Justice, S.M. Sikri and leading members of the former bureaucracy, Rajeshwar Dayal, Badr-ud-Din Tyabji, Govind Narain and T.C.A. Srinivasvaradhan — become part of the historical record. An investigation organised by Judge Tarkunde goes further. It speaks of a conspiracy within ruling circles.

The inexplicable reluctance of the Government of India to institute an official enquiry into this terrible holocaust is profoundly disturbing in a country that orders enquiries into every piddling occurrence. Apart from creating the impression that the looting, the arson and the killing was organised and condoned by those who are part of governance, it heightens the feeling of insecurity

and alienation in the Sikh community. No amount of secularising sentimentality is going to restore confidence in the justice of those who rule. Surely, a well-meaning Rajiv Gandhi understands that enquiries do not open wounds. They heal them by restoring faith in justice.

Even as this paramount issue complicates the handling of the critical Punjab crisis, with Sikh terrorism still equated with the Sikh community, the more thoughtful worry about the repercussions on the armed forces and on our entire north-western border with Pakistan. There is a dangerous and very conscious silence on these matters, a silence that should be disturbing to important sections of the ruling fraternity, now victims of the habit of drifting along with whatever political combination is in the ascendant.

We are also living with what is described as a 'spy scandal' inside the all-powerful offices of the Prime Minister, the Defence Ministry and the Presidency. Actually, by and large, it is the usual business intelligence able, through petty corruption, to penetrate critical levels of the secretariats. Inevitably, it escalates into areas of national security. The entire Government of India, unable to establish proper confidentiality, has been 'leaking' for many years, for almost everything that circulates openly is marked 'secret'. Now, no 'secrets' remain apart from Rajiv Gandhi's thoughts.

The surprise and astonishment on these goings-on is understandable. With the ruling party peddling its business favours over many years, and slush funding of an awesome kind taking over the political life of the ruling party, it was only to be expected that the regiments of clerks would be imitating their masters and taking their paltry 'cuts'. If their corruption touched the hitherto sacrosanct defence system, why not? The play on armaments by our rulers, and the kick-backs via intermediaries, are the talk of the diplomatic world, here and abroad. And is not India seen as the receiver of junk from all parts of the developed world? Are there secrets embodied in junk?

The tragic aspect of these events is that our media is tame, censors itself and is prepared to be manipulated even into character assassination so long as the dressing is loaded with nationalistic and patriotic overtones. Only the major newspapers have the resources—and the skills—to really open this tin of worms. Then, we would see our Intelligence for what it is. But they do not move for fear that they might lose their vantage positions within the tiny 10-million-strong elite (tax paying, just over a million!) that treats this sub-continent of 750 millions as if it were private property.

In a fragile situation of this sort, when a once dominant mafia's agents are being neutralised by a transferring of officials, a re-allotment of responsibilities and a new alignment of decision-making, the reporting is invariably programmed to give the semblance of a clean-up—yes, even though the commentary is actually indicting the assassinated PM's performance.

A new mafia, blessed by the new dynastic leader, will soon take over. New account books will be opened. This is the immutable law of India's feudal democracy or democratic monarchy. A well-meaning Rajiv Gandhi, anxious to end vendettas, committed even to purge the openly criminal, has to emerge from those traps to remain credible. If these frameworks of change were understood more widely, we as voters might even grow to some political maturity.

The people, so often betrayed, do not quite know what to make of it all. Clearly, they believe that it is their bounden duty to preserve the coherence and strength of governance. It may vary at the Centre and in the States, but it should have the necessary muscle to programme and to implement. The voting patterns reflect this. The permanently poor are more patiently consistent than those who are rising from shortages, insecurities and anxieties. The sub-continent remains strangely polarised, particularly since the Emergency. And there can be no national cohesion in this polaris-

ation. Its dissolution demands structural transformations.

Naturally, with a phenomenal mandate of panic given them by a fairly sizeable voting section of an electorate of 280 millions (with, of course, almost an equal number expressing their opposition in splintered, blunted fashion), the experts in organising defections and topplings have become the most zealous proponents of anti-defectionism. So far, so good. We await the fate of this hurried parliamentary enactment when the fertile and creative mind of the amoral politician gets to work, aided and abetted by a variety of interpretations of fundamental rights. The crafty children of the *Gita* certainly know a thing or two about double-talk and double-think.

Against this background, we are told that we are being led into the twenty-first century. 'We', means actually the ten millions who constitute the elite, largely urban, and serviced by some 200 million. 'We' should be those who live in the many centuries long forgotten, faceless, lost in the race to 'modernise', an unhappy reminder of traditional lethargies, austerities, superstitions and rituals ('folk dances', notwithstanding). Do they move forward, or backward? The prospect is not encouraging in the context of an exploding population, and there is no thought even of treating this as a major over-riding priority with a minimum health servicing in the villages.

This is the gut question of expanding numbers which the ruling youth of our tiny elite refuses to face, and in this very refusal denies a genuine and perhaps unique, organic growth for India in the evolution of a more civilised texturing of life, a texturing that belongs to all centuries, fusing the continuities in those values of an aesthetic life which must survive the sweep of science and technology, the industrial revolutions, the sophistications of electronics and robotisation, and what is yet to come from our journey into Space.

The failure here is massive and it vitiates the many aspects of our growth scenarios, widening gulfs between social strata, sharpening

cleavages and making political management take recourse to strong-arm tactics against the people — a short-lived exercise at the best of times in a country that is a continent. In other words, our debates become pigeon-minded in the absence of perceptive leadership.

Unable to comprehend the totality of this challenge for an India which will soon be peopled by 1000 millions, elitist coteries (once aged, now youthful) have taken over the levers of power. As always, they concentrate decision-making, put their faith in implementation that is ordered by fiat from above, and imagine that unity and discipline are matters for artificial rhetoric and invocation — that, too, from the politically-manipulated and basically counter-productive communication systems known as Akashvani and Doordarshan. They battle among themselves and within themselves. It is the nature of the coterie, call it what you will — the 'kitchen' or the 'pantry' or the 'boudoir'.

Coterie politics make it virtually impossible to carry out urgent restructurings of the political system. These are seen as a threat to the coteries. They make investigation a contemptible exercise because they might need to misuse authority to signal the timings for riot, loot, arson and murder. They see spy scenarios as salutary warnings to those who are in the habit of investigating the power centres. Slush funds are, after all, vital to their democratic ambience based on unemployed, lumpen youth — and that's what really matters.

Keep everyone expectant, united and somewhat satiated and hope-filled. At the highest levels of governance, there is a pretence that we are becoming as good as the best. Of such stuff is our political 'stability' made. And, by the looks of it, it does deliver the votes — so far. The *status quo* is becoming sacrosanct, an all-party affair. Unchanging India is still with us, in a sense. When the explosive tension bursts, it could be terminal in the context of the concepts we live by.

When we turn to our embattled and confused world, particularly

where political coteries work rather openly as a recognised element in governance, we become conscious of an all-pervasive need for the cultivated charismatic totem (usually bereft of those attributes which make for intelligent, perceptive and purposeful leadership) increasingly dependent on these shadowy and basically irresponsible presences. The obeisance to the members of the coterie around Rajiv Gandhi in the central hall of Parliament has to be seen to be believed. The rotting 'dynamics' of the present era are captured in these scenes.

If youth is to lead, then it must be acknowledged as outstanding by the elders. This is certainly possible whatever the frustrations and alienations inherent in such an adjustment. But artificial euphoria, I am afraid, is no cementing force, particularly in a complex, sprawling sub-continent like ours. Nor a 'generational change' in the legislatures of the kind projected. In fact, it is better openly to admit the patent simplicity, even the glaring inexperience, so long as honesty and determination of purpose is to the fore, linked integrally to structural change. This is not the message that is crystalising around even a rather sympathetic Rajiv Gandhi after his so-called '100 days' (forgive us our imitative clap-trap!).

Our coterie politics unfortunately flourish on a largely non-existent, non-functioning party, without any seriously thought-out programme or perspective. With no opposition worth the name to react to, and no grappling with the alternatives needed to make our social growth just and creative, coterie politics become more and more obsessive. Without correctives, the *status quo* strengthens, smoulders, becomes explosive. Remember, half the nation voted against dynasty, charisma, manipulation. A tiny shift in voting percentages makes all the difference. Another coterie. Another mafia. Another euphoria. Another demoralisation.

The political perspectives before the nation cannot evade these grass roots realities. No amount of computerised voting scenarios, inane public rhetoric, both populist and

patriotic, can cover the sicknesses that are taking hold of this land. They are curable, but not within the political, economic and social frameworks embraced by our ruling and oppositional politicians.

The wretched frameworks will have to change, and the people who work within them. A father to brother to mother to son generational change or 'new look' just will not do. A leadership will have to arise whose sensitivities are nourished in the realities of this sub-continent and in service to its people. We have drifted from these anchorages despite our tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Corrective leaderships have a knack of appearing suddenly in distorted, damaged situations. We can only hope that they will be healthy, democratic and just. They need not be, as we have learned to our cost in so many parts of this tortured world.

The vital qualities of sensitive and just governance are poison for the coterie politics now very much a part of the national scene. There can be no stirring into an uncertain future unless such politics are made to end in the dust-bin of history. One very effective way of ensuring this is to recall the 'talisman' Mahatma Gandhi left us. When in doubt, he said, think of the poorest person you have seen and ask yourself whether what you contemplate is in his interest. It is surprising how a single sentence uncovers the truth, begins the struggle to bridge precept and practise. There is no alternative to this talisman for those who rule this sub-continent where many centuries telescope into the present.

The over-centralised, highly bureaucratic political framework we have given ourselves was effective in the early stages of our consolidation and growth, but today it is non-performing or self-destructive or paralytic. It has to be drastically altered to cope with the growth of new skills, new aspirations, and new perspectives. We have to texture a society of 1000 millions, in open debate. Youth power is not enough. It has to have solid persuasive content to build a humane model of growth. This effort is not visible.

A new framework can only be evolved by a political formation which links with the finest traditions of the old continental Indian National Congress built on the values of justice around a genuine and constantly growing consensus of understanding on the complexities of this sprawling land of many cultures and strivings. The centenary of the old Indian National Congress (that is no more) must see the rise of another formation of equal depth and scope. Only such a mobilisation can wash away the filth of our politics. The current consciousness expresses itself in vague assertions about a coalition party, a Bharat Desham, and the need for 'federal governance'. It is revealing.

Sooner or later, we will realise that there will have to be a sharp confrontation with the political parties of today. It will mean mass action around a set of catalytic issues which galvanise the silent, dormant, cynical, despairing majority. The equally divided vote for and against the diseased Congress reflects a political desperation, a kind of despairing negativism, nihilism. This is the psychological base on which to build the challenge. Is there leadership of this quality? Can it gather its strength and learn to work in understanding? Or will we have to wait for the next Mahatma?

An awakening, or an opening of the eyes, has to be around this central theme of real change. Massive mandates mean nothing in the absence of a new consciousness around perspectives. They only heighten expectations, frustrations, alienations and dangerous demoralisations — the stuff of authoritarianism, of elitist and divisive hegemonies, of petrifications which affect the growth of human sensibilities.

These concerns, underpinning governability, are actually more fundamental to our population-packed-sub-continent than to the comparatively empty regions of our world. How long can we remain neglectful? It is a question worth asking, even at the risk of being tedious. Let's keep asking it. May be, it might stir the thinking apparatus of our tired and exhausted people.

Economic stock-taking

SUDHIR MULJI

WHEN the industrial history of India is written, the quarter century between 1960 and 1985 will surely be looked upon as the years that the locusts hath eaten. Ever since it became evident that the second plan was not proceeding as well as expected, the government with eager hands grasped the levers of control with disastrous results. That curious mixture of Fabian ideals and Tsarist autocracy gave the bureaucrats an opportunity to run the system exactly as they had done in the abnormal times of the second war. But the economic work-horse was not as amenable; the simple rules that were so successful in a more desperate age proved singularly inefficient in a more complex era.

You could no longer simply order a factory to produce regardless of the cost; that slightly indelicate word 'profit' had reared its ugly head; and then when you tried to fix a fair profit with the help of the Indian Accounts and Audit Service, you soon found that you had to pay the domestic manufacturer about three times as much as you would have had to pay for importing the good. At first all this was just considered part of development; there were all those soothing phrases from the economists about 'infant industries', dumping, foreign monopolies, ex-

ploitation, unequal partnerships and so on. But gradually there came a time when the consumer could no longer be fooled; there may be very little he can do about it, but the evidence of a high cost inefficient industry is too blatant to be ignored.

On the industrial scene other things have gone wrong too. The public sector which was supposed to command the heights of the economy by scaling up to points where the private sector could not, would not, or was not allowed to climb, has failed miserably. It has neither generated the investment surpluses that efficient monopolies should be able to squeeze out of the system, nor has it provided the sort of standards of organisation or training or quality that could act as an example to others. On the contrary, the public sector's conduct leaves a great deal to be desired and the bumbling bureaucratic incompetence has sucked the resources from the government at a pace and in a manner that would do a leech proud.

Although one would not have thought our overall industrial and economic performance anything but a dismal failure, we do not seem to be ashamed of it. On the contrary, there is a firm belief both within the Indian Establishment and outside

that we should be congratulated on having avoided many of the pitfalls that other developing countries have fallen into. With smug complacency we congratulate ourselves on escaping the kind of debt problems of the Latin American countries, and we justifiably treat with contempt the easy economic solutions that the dictatorships of poor nations seek.

We do sometimes acknowledge that a few of the Asian countries like Taiwan, Singapore, Korea and Hong Kong have done far better than us but these are not examples that inspire us. A great nation can hardly follow the lead of petty States however successful they might seem to be. We consider our development problems so unique that we cannot be expected to learn from others.

Yet, however many paeans of praise we may sing to our own achievements, there is no denying that after thirty years of industrialisation, exports from the whole of India are less than those of Hong Kong — a city the size of Bombay. Our Gross Domestic Product is less than that of Brazil and Mexico, when theirs was less than half ours in 1960. Our manufacturing industry is smaller than that of Spain — and all this is calculated in gross terms. Once you divide all these figures by the size of our population we fall into the category of the poorest of the poor. Our per capita income is ranked just below Burundi, Tanzania, Somalia and Papa Doc's Haiti, and just above Idi Amin's Uganda, Upper Volta, Malawi and Zaire.

We really do not have too many excuses; even China with her larger population is well ahead of us and, surely, in any relevant political or economic sense, we would in gross terms at least rank somewhere alongside her and Japan as a power in Asia. Economic comparisons with Japan may now seem absurd, but it was only thirty years ago that she had a smaller steel and car industry than ours. Today we can only goggle in bewilderment at the gigantic strides that she has taken in making steel from Indian iron ore and providing us with the know-how and production techniques to manufacture India's most popular car.

One should of course be careful of all these international statistical comparisons; it is well-known that they tend to exaggerate economic disparities, but with all the caveats in the world they present a distressing story of our industrial effort. How has it all happened? Are we really as incompetent and as inefficient as all that? Can we do no better than be sandwiched between Uganda and Haiti? For an Indian, however objective he may try to be, the notion that we cannot do better than that is intolerable.

We have brought ourselves to this absurd level not because we lack the capability or the resources to do better but through sheer folly; and we should not underestimate the power of folly; for as Barbara Tuchman in her brilliant book, *The March of Folly*, points out: 'A phenomenon noticeable throughout history regardless of place or period is the pursuit by governments of policies contrary to their own interests. Mankind it seems makes a poorer performance of government than almost any other human activity. In this sphere, wisdom, common sense and available information is less operative and more frustrated than it should be.'

In her book she gives many historical examples of the folly of governments and the reader will find them convincing or otherwise depending upon his own experience. Certainly, in so far as economic policy making in India goes, her thesis seems utterly convincing. In an apposite paragraph she writes 'wooden-headedness, the source of self-deception, is a factor that plays a remarkably large role in government. It consists in assessing a situation in terms of pre-conceived fixed notions while ignoring or rejecting any contrary signs. It is acting according to wish while not allowing oneself to be deflected by the facts. It is epitomized in a historian's statement about Philip II of Spain, the surpassing wooden-head of all sovereigns: No experience of the failure of his policy could shake his belief in its essential excellence.'

For those who follow the economic debate in this country, there is

undoubtedly the same feeling of weariness that intelligent men must have felt in Philip II's time. The unshakeable faith that the government and bureaucracy seems to possess that the path we have travelled along is both the right way and the only way has led to despair, and in turn that despair will lead to violence. For, the true measure of their success and ultimate popularity cannot be seen in the victories of the ruling party at the ballot box, but in the signs or otherwise of the progress we see around us. Those who believe that we have done as well as we could reasonably expect to do delude themselves and the cost of their delusions will be reflected not only in the comparison tables of the World Bank but also in the towns and villages of this country.

What is sad for the impotent observer is the conviction that on the industrial front we could still recover. The process is going to be exceedingly painful, tedious and probably long-drawn but the basics of the Industrial Revolution are now firmly established in the Indian psyche. There are the right ingredients available; skilled entrepreneurs, intelligent engineers and a labour force that is hard-working and seems capable of being trained and disciplined in the proper way. We may never achieve the industrial miracles of a Japan or a Germany but given the right policies there is no reason to suppose that we will not be able to compare favourably with Spain, Brazil, or in manufacturing industries even with Italy and England.

What we need now is for the leadership to recognise that the old ideas have failed, and that it is little use to slither about retaining the earlier ideology and trying to make it work. The controlled economy is doomed and should now be recognised as such, and if there are people who doubt this, a few more years of the mess we are in will resolve their doubts. It is now just a question of trying to find the right formula for escaping from the constraints in which those educated in early Socialist Britain have put us.

On the agricultural front we can perhaps afford to be a little more

sanguine. In this area the government's intervention perforce has been minimal. Old institutions have persisted but the support rather than control that the authorities have provided has been on the whole beneficial. Besides, the substantial strides that agricultural technology has made should have helped. We need not go as far as Professor Khusro who in 1972 said 'One can perhaps stick one's neck out and assert that India's food problem has been solved for good', but one can at least recognise that the ability to feed ourselves, supported by a sensible trade policy that might allow imports and encourage exports, should enable the authorities to avoid the grosser humiliations of famine and disaster.

Fortunately for our agricultural policy, the government has restrained itself from trying out exotic social experiments on the villages. One can easily imagine what might have happened if Pandit Nehru had translated his admiration for the Soviet system by the introduction of collective farms and all the other bureaucratic systems that the Russians are now trying so painfully to abandon. The conversion of the Ukraine from a wheat bowl to a dust bowl has warned the world sufficiently against the State taking over the commanding heights of agriculture.

Of course, there are those who will find these views too complacent; they would argue against traditional agriculture not simply on grounds of efficiency but also as a way of fighting the social structure of the villages. One would have total sympathy with that line of revolutionary reasoning, if the new order was to combine efficiency with revolution. The distinguished communist economist, Ashok Mitra, wrote, in his customary superb prose, that one reason for that outstanding black cricketer Viv Richards's greatness was his determination to beat the white man at his own game.

One so wishes that all revolutionaries were like that. It would be truly exciting if a communist State government in India did try to succeed in running agriculture or industry in

its own State more competently, without importing a lot of capitalists, but by, let us say, making the public sector of their own State produce more. Of course there are endless excuses about Centre-State relationships but Viv Richards has never made excuses about the colour of his skin; he has just made himself the greatest batsman in the world.

In the final analysis, one cannot help suspecting that those who speak most loudly about the iniquities — and there must be many — of village life have very little working knowledge or interest in methods for improving it. They remind one of those who cry out in shrill tones against blood sports; but one knows quite well that a pet animal would be looked after very much better by those who go in for blood sports than those who avoid them.

It would seem then that agriculture in India though not spectacular has done quite well; and industry though performing abysmally could be put right if the necessary political will to change policies were forthcoming. To those who find this sufficient, the Indian world will seem optimistic enough; but unfortunately this does not cover all the dimensions of the Indian polity. We have a terrible and growing problem in our midst which we seem to prefer to ignore, though we know all about it; and that is our unchecked and growing population.

To be able to grasp some notion of what we are up against we need to look at some figures. It has been estimated by the World Bank that the Indian population by the turn of the century will reach around 950 million and by the year 2050 1400 million. We will by the first decade of the next century be the most populous nation in the world, outstripping China by an ever-growing tide of human beings. By this time our major cities like Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta and Madras will be overflowing, with Bombay alone expecting a population of over 17 million people. If these projections are reasonable — and our census statistics are really very reliable — we shall be confronted with a problem the like of which we have not seen.

For, at some point in time, our ability to feed our population is not going to be sufficient to meet the needs and aspirations of our young. They will need jobs, and not just the promises of jobs. At that point other structures of our society will begin to crack. The urban, unemployed will look for jobs and unless we can transform our creaking industry into a dynamic one we shall simply not have enough to share among everyone.

The writer taking stock of our economy twenty-five years from now may be faced with a frightening scenario; a population that is comfortably in excess of a thousand million, and racing rapidly to overtake the Chinese as the most populous nation in the world; an industry run by bureaucrats and quite unable to respond to the growing tensions within the economy; and an agricultural sector that is barely able to produce the surpluses for its own rural poor.

Is all this simply a philosophy of despair, of doom and gloom which in an earlier story made Cassandra so unpopular or is there something we can do about it? Clearly to surrender to despair would be fatal and in any case so against the optimism of mankind that a picture of unrelieved pessimism must be rejected.

But, if we are to do something about our growing burdens, we need to apply reason and not emotion or ideology to our problems. We need to recognise that modern technology is capable of providing a very large range of goods and services provided it is given an opportunity to do so. In an earlier age of pessimism, Keynes wrote, 'The pace at which we can reach our destination of economic bliss will be governed by four things — our power to control population, our determination to avoid wars and civil dissensions, our willingness to entrust to science the direction of those matters which are properly the concern of science, and the rate of accumulation as fixed between our production and our consumption; of which the last will easily look after itself given the first three.'

We must now begin to take in hand the direction of the first three issues. As to population control we have shown willingness to spend a great deal on the physical aspects of family planning, but we have done very little, indeed nothing, to supplement this with economic incentives and disincentives. The Chinese have introduced a series of taxes and subsidies penalising those who exceed the maintenance quota of two children and rewarding those who produce less.

Surprisingly, perhaps, these policies do work. They have been able to slow the growth of their population to a point where they are confident of being able to stabilise their number to about one thousand two hundred million and, considering that their base figure is already larger than ours, this must be reckoned as a substantial achievement. As to Keynes's second requirement, one can add little to the Prime Minister's own words that we need a period of both internal and external peace. We cannot afford the alienation of our minorities whether they be from Punjab or Assam.

On the third issue of science and in that Keynes included technology, much should be said. We must now abandon lock, stock and barrel the endless string of controls that have bedevilled our economy. It may well lead to an initial imbalance in the distribution of income and wealth but these will correct themselves in due course. In the longer run these distortions will prove to be very minor in comparison with the major gains of a much higher level of economic activity and employment. We must push ourselves at a break-neck speed if our industry is not only to outstrip the growth of our population but also to provide our society with the necessary wherewithall to raise our standard of living to reasonable levels.

To be able to do this successfully we shall need to integrate our economy to that of the world so as to enable us to absorb the growing surplus of goods in the world. Above all, we need the political and social will to rise above parochial and ideological issues to so concentrate our energies as to release our society from the curse of poverty and deprivation.

The drag

L. C. JAIN

IN his inaugural address to Parliament, the President has extended an exciting invitation to the 21st Century, on behalf of the new government at the Centre. Can we leave Uttar Pradesh behind? No, we must take it with us, for, the challenge of

taking UP along highlights the challenge implicit in taking the country as a whole to that fateful destination.

By the year 2001 there will be over 995 million Indians of whom the largest contingent, 165 million, that is one out of every six Indians, will be from UP. It fact, more UPites may occupy the bus in the journey to the year 2001 if special efforts are not made to contain UP's population growth rate which in 1971-1981 at 25.4 per cent was above the national average. Besides, its average exponential rate of population growth shows a steady increase: 1.54, 1.79 and 2.29 in 1951-61, 1961-'71 and 1971-81 respectively.

As the eminent nutritionist, Dr. C. Gopalan has warned, the qualitative dimensions of India's population problems are more serious than its quantitative aspects, and that improvement in the former is essential for containing the quality:

'The qualitative dimension (which) should cause even greater concern and alarm...of the nearly 23 million children who will be born in our country in 1983, nearly three million may be expected to die before they reach the first year, another one million more will drop by the way-side before they complete their childhood. Of the remaining 19 million, nearly nine million will emerge into adulthood with impaired physical stamina, low productivity and poor mental abilities because of serious under-nutrition and ill-health during their childhood; yet another seven million who will suffer milder forms of malnutrition may reach adulthood with less striking physical and mental impairment. Only less than three million of the 23 million to be born in 1983 will become truly healthy, physically fit, productive and intellectually capable citizens of this country.'

There is a marked imbalance in Uttar Pradesh's population: It has only 885 females against India's average 933 females per 1000 males. While UP ranks number one in population, in sex ratio, it ranks

23rd in the country. While there is no clear explanation for this adverse sex ratio, the contributory factors generally mentioned are higher infant mortality among female than male children and high maternal mortality among other hazards to women's survival. Deaths of infants (under one year of age) account for more than 30 per cent of total deaths in the country, and deaths of children under four years are nearly 45 per cent of total deaths, according to Dr. Gopalan. Compared with Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa and West Bengal, UP has the highest population of households (52.2 per cent) with diets inadequate in calories, protein or both. The current reports of rising toll of deaths from the cold wave in UP and Bihar in particular, provide chilling confirmation to malnutrition, lack of shelter and clothing — the three basic necessities of life.

Thus, the task in Uttar Pradesh on the population front is two-edged: limiting the numbers and simultaneously improving the survival especially of females of both tender age and above. Both these objectives require provision of geographically well spread and qualitatively better health services and nutrition, easy availability of safe drinking water and fuel in Uttar Pradesh's villages. These are the minimum. If the State is not to do it all, the abysmal ignorance of the population would have to be ended rapidly to enable it to help itself to the maximum and thus share the burden of development. Literacy in 1981 was 27.16 per cent in Uttar Pradesh against 36.23 per cent in India. More painfully, less than 10 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's rural women were literate against twice that proportion in India.

Uttar Pradesh had about 46 million children in 1981 in the age group 0 to 14. These are children, for whom the 21st century matters more than those who may not live to see the day. Alas, they are faring no better, and indeed relatively worse in Uttar Pradesh than most other places in India. Against 38.45 per cent of India's children in the age group 5 to 9, only 25.45 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's were attend-

ing school as per the 1981 census. During the first three years (1980-1983) of the sixth plan, enrolment of girls in Uttar Pradesh in the I to V as well as VI to VIII class was a third of the five-year target. Can we ensure that at least these 46 million children and the newborns hereafter make the 21st century with a matriculation certificate even if hopefully jobs are delinked from degrees?

The sixth plan mid-term appraisal also reveals glaring shortfalls in the establishment of health care services which are acknowledged as fundamental to containing the population growth. The five-year all-India target was to set up 40,000 sub centres. But in the first 3 years (1980-83) only 16,200 sub centres had been established in the country. Though separate figures for Uttar Pradesh are not readily available, it should be no surprise if its share in the shortfall is above average. And, even in Uttar Pradesh's hill areas which receive a special 70 per cent central subsidy, progress in respect of drinking water supply, rural electrification etc., was behind schedule, according to the Appraisal.

It is to be assumed that the estimated 30 million persons currently loaded with poverty in the country will not be seen carrying this loathsome baggage into the new century. The contingent from Uttar Pradesh among the poor is huge. 82 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's population is rural, of this nearly sixty per cent is below the poverty line. Incidentally, in 1960-61, the poor accounted for only 42 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's rural population.

While poverty is growing, regrettably the programmes for removal of poverty are succeeding only marginally. A recent independent but sympathetic evaluation of two rural blocks in Uttar Pradesh shows that not more than 22 to 33 per cent of the families aided under these programmes had been able to cross the poverty line. It also revealed that 50 per cent of the total subsidy doled out had either gone waste or had been misutilised. Dr. Nilkanth Rath (*Garibi hatao* — can IRDP do it?) has shown that on an all-India basis even the estimate of 20 per cent crossing the poverty line

is on the high side. In fact, he estimates that 'about 3 per cent of the poor households in rural India would have been helped to live above poverty, if for a while only.'

The situation offers substantial scope for a war on both poverty and corruption — a twin challenge within the commitments of the new government.

The 1981 Census also reveals some agonising facts about Uttar Pradesh's work force and the incidence of unemployment. In twenty years (1961-81), the proportion of agricultural labour among rural workers had increased from less than 20 to over 30 per cent. In the same period, the proportion of main workers to the population had dwindled from 39.12 per cent to 29.13 per cent. This decline was even sharper among women workers whose proportion in 1981 was a bare 6.02 per cent against 18.14 per cent in 1961. Scheduled castes make up 21.16 per cent of Uttar Pradesh's population (against 15.75 per cent of India's) and agricultural labour is nearly synonymous with scheduled castes whose welfare is a proclaimed priority. In the life of this section of the population, poverty and unemployment are enmeshed. The Employment Guarantee Scheme (*la* Maharashtra) appears, as of now, to be the most effective way to improve their bargaining power and income.

Another independent study shows how even tragedies fail to generate a special concern for the poor. In the 14 centres established in 8 Uttar Pradesh's districts in recent years for the rehabilitation of flood-affected handloom women weavers with the aid of an international agency, the bulk of the money had been spent on construction of administrative buildings and weaving sheds, most of which were lying idle. Women weavers in whose name the project was sponsored and funded, were conspicuous by their absence in these centres. Against 75 families to be employed in each centre, there were only 7 in one, 6 in another, 1 in the third and none in the fourth covered by the study. The last two of these four centres are located in predominantly

Muslim populated areas and that highlights the scope for bridging the gap between the reality and the intention of serving the minorities.

One barrier to our entry into the 21st century may be the 'filth and squalor' which the Estimates Committee (48th Report, 1983) wants removed to give the 'masses of our people, a decent life.' Presently, the Committee says the coverage of sanitation facilities in rural areas is less than 1 per cent; and the target for the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1981-90) is to cover 25 per cent of India's rural population or 126 million in India and 22.5 million in UP. When pressed by the Committee to state the progress, the Secretary of the Ministry of Works and Housing admitted that 'we do not have a full feedback on this.' A bit surprising from a Ministry that only two years earlier monitored massive Asiad construction to perfection and won world-wide applause.

Coming back to UP, the Committee was told that in so far as the supply of drinking water to rural areas is concerned, the coverage 'ranges between 7.20 per cent in respect of Uttar Pradesh and 70.28 per cent in the case of Gujarat.' Can one plead more for not leaving Uttar Pradesh behind?

While poor management of anti-poverty and minimum needs programme can be somewhat explained, that of large investments for modernisation of UP's economy is unforgivable. About three fourths of UP's plan resources are being absorbed for decades by the infrastructure sector, namely, power and major irrigation. A study done by UP's State Planning Commission a few years ago brought out that cost escalation due to 'management factors' (that is controllable factors) was a staggering phenomenon. Annual saving could be over Rs. 500 crores in these two sectors. What a mouth-watering sum for management-wallahs who one hears are being summoned in strength in aid of the government.

Another study by the same body showed that in the case of the socially sensitive programmes like poverty

removal, minimum needs, welfare of the scheduled castes, women, children, the landless etcetera, more than 60 per cent of the budgetary allocation is spent only during the last quarter of the financial year — closer to the biggest festival day in India, the 31st March. Result: most of the funds intended by the legislature for the weaker sections go waste as expenditure is rushed to meet the financial year deadline rather than the live line of men, women and children worthy of State aid.

In the sphere of law and order, the Ministry of Home Affairs in its evidence before the Estimates Committee (49th Report, 1982-83) named UP, Punjab and Gujarat as three major States outside of the north-east, which have been facing 'serious law and order' problems. It is noteworthy that the Home Ministry attributed 'the climate of unrest' in these States to 'regional imbalances, rising expectations and economic frustration of the people.'

None of these facts or concerns about UP are new or unknown. But unfortunately they have failed to evoke more than a marginal response from the powers that be. Obviously, UP needs a more serious treatment than just an improvement in programme content and implementation or in administrative or police efficiency or change of Chief Ministers every six months — the latest remedy. In the corridors of power, UP is regarded not as a dignified autonomous States but a territory of Union Ministers hailing from UP. Another aspect is as Sucheta Kripalani, one time Chief Minister of UP, used to say that holding discussions with district collectors (54 then, 56 now) was like addressing a public meeting.

Size is UP's most serious handicap. It is too big to be manageable even by a well trained commissar. The solution lies in the division of the State. Indeed, the case for the division of UP was strongly pressed before the States Reorganisation Commission as early as thirty years ago (1954-55), in a memorandum by 97 MLAs representing 16 western districts of the State (later 70 of them mysteriously withdrew their

support!) Their arguments in favour of dividing the State were mainly (a) physically and geographically, the hill and plateau regions of UP have little in common with the Gangetic Valley; (b) the size is unwieldy and as a result the administration is inefficient; (c) there is neglect of certain areas; and (d) they sympathised with the view that the States of the Union should be roughly equal in size and importance 'so that no one unit is in a position to exercise a dominant influence in all-India affairs.'

However, the majority of the members of the Commission did not feel convinced that the size of the State was or would be an impediment in any of these respects and did not therefore support the demand for the division of UP. But one of the members of the Commission, K.M. Pannikar, differed from his colleagues and marshalled facts and figures to argue that UP's development was poor, there was inefficiency and neglect, and these were not unrelated to its size. He argued that, not unnaturally, the problems of the various areas of the State differed, and an administration which has so large a population to look after is not necessarily in the best position to attend to the particular regional problems.

Moreover, Pannikar argued that 'the test of economical and efficient administration is obviously whether a State is or has been in a position to increase the expenditure on nation-building activities'; and on examination he concluded that 'it does not appear that Uttar Pradesh can claim any particular advantage or achievements in this matter.' Finding that UP had the lowest literacy of all Part A States (as they were then categorised) he found little justification for the claim that 'the Uttar Pradesh Government because of the size of the State has been particularly efficient.'

The final argument for maintaining the large size of UP and Pannikar's reaction to it, must be reproduced in full and deserves to be pondered over by every Indian:

'One of the commonest arguments advanced before us by

leaders in Uttar Pradesh was that the existence of a large, powerful and well-organised State in the Gangetic Valley was a guarantee for India's unity; that such a State would be able to correct the disruptive tendencies of other States, and to ensure the ordered progress of India. The same idea has been put to us in many other forms such as that Uttar Pradesh is the 'back bone of India', the centre from which all other States derive their ideas and their culture, etc. It is not necessary to examine these claims seriously for nothing is more certain to undermine our growing sense of unity than this claim of suzerainty or paramountcy by one State over others.'

With UP's own poor performance of 30 years now before us, it is clear that it was too tall, if not presumptuous, a claim that it would 'ensure the ordered progress of India.' If anything, its sluggish growth is a mill-stone round India's neck, and all the might and mandate of the new government to move India to the 21st century will come to nought if UP remains immovable and unmanageable. One also cannot fail to notice the 'whiteman's burden' UP carries on its shoulders of providing a 'guarantee for India's unity.' There is no other constituent of the Indian Union whose political leadership harbours such paranoia. It is brazen to claim to be more patriotic than the others.

The reorganisation of UP into four or five manageable States is an historic necessity. It will open the door for each constituent to leap forward, as we know from the example of Gujarat and Haryana which have after they were let free enriched Indian development without affecting the development of the parts from which they were separated. Formation of smaller States is not a disruptive step. It is a constructive step. Indeed, given UP's dismal record, it is an imperative. Or else not only UP but the whole of India will remain stuck to the 20th century.

If UP can be moved India will move.

The secular myth

TAVLEEN SINGH

ON August 23, Delhi's elegant Vigyan Bhawan was used for an unusual ceremony. An organisation from Andhra Pradesh with proclaimed loyalties to Mrs. Gandhi set up a makeshift temple to the goddess Durga in the main hall of the building and worshipped her in the name of the then Prime Minister. According to a report in the *Statesman*, the goddess was propitiated 'for our country's peace, progress and prosperity in the name of our beloved Prime Minister, Smt. Indira Gandhi.'

Mrs. Gandhi was, however, not present to participate in the ceremony which included the chanting of the goddess' name 1,00,000 times, followed by flowers being offered to the deity, followed by another 1,00,000 chants and the breaking of 1,000 coconuts.

The *Statesman* reported that the invitation card sent out by the Andhra Pradesh Kalavedika mentioned that the festivities had the blessings of some prominent Congress(I) politicians, including former Chief Minister T. Anjaiah, the party's leader in the Legislative Council, K. Rosiah and four former Andhra ministers, M.V. Krishna Rao, V. Purushottam Reddy, K. Prabhakara Reddy and Hanumanthaiah.

The ceremony has a significance which goes well beyond its absurdity and the fact that it was held in a hall normally used only for events of national or international importance. The significance of the high-level Durga puja lies in its being an indication of the degree to which religion is now receiving political

patronage.

For many years there have been jokes and sneers about Mrs. Gandhi's weakness for holy men and almost every other month some newspaper or other published a picture of her worshipping at a temple or dargah or gurudwara. None of this was taken seriously by anyone because, on the face of it, there had been no threat to that most sacred of India's sacred cows 'secularism'. This, in retrospect, has been a very serious mistake because slowly, almost imperceptibly, the very meaning of secularism has changed.

'The word has come to mean the 'equality of all religions' instead of 'the State, morals, education, etc., being independent of religion.'

Mrs. Gandhi considered herself secular because she felt that even if she went to Birla Mandir on Janamashtami it could do no harm because on Ramzan evenings she could be seen breaking bread with eminent Muslims and when in Punjab, could be spotted in a gurudwara or two, clad in salwar-kameez with head bowed in reverence before the holy *Granth*.

Mrs. Gandhi's example is imitated not just by her own party but by opposition leaders as well who are just as aware that there is no easier way to the average Indian's heart than through his gods. The result in two words is: communal riots.

Almost all the major communal riots in the past couple of years have been caused by the emergence

of militant Hindu festivals previously unknown in the area. These festivals generally involve public worship in the streets and more often than not are patronized by politicians. In many cases, 'secular' Congress(I) leaders have happily shared the stage with members of the RSS, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Virat Hindu Sammelan.

The Hyderabad riots last September, in which around 40 people were killed, were sparked off, for instance, by the Ganesh Utsav. Ganesh or Ganapathi puja has always been associated in the past with Maharashtra. It was brought to Hyderabad in 1979 by Congress(I) chief minister, Chenna Reddy, who lent it ostentatious patronage. He is said to have flown to the ceremony in a helicopter which scattered flowers over the massive procession.

The festival involves the setting up of neighbourhood statues of Ganesh, which are worshipped publicly for several days and on the last day of the festivities, are taken out in procession and immersed in water. Since Hyderabad is not on the sea, the statues are taken to the Hussain Talab, in the centre of the city, for immersion.

Every year the statues have got bigger and bigger so that last year some of them were gigantic and built of cement. The Hussain Talab, apart from being one of Hyderabad's beauty spots, is also associated with the memory of a Muslim saint and Muslim resentment has grown steadily with the increasing size of the Ganeshes that are dumped in it every year. The number of idols has multiplied so rapidly that there is even danger of the lake eventually drying up from silt.

This, however, is not what primarily disturbs the local Muslim population. What does disturb them is the fact that the Chief Minister, in keeping with the tradition set by Chenna Reddy, invariably attends the ceremonies which precede the immersion. At these ceremonies, inflammatory anti-Muslim speeches are often made by members of the communal Hindu organizations who blatantly utilize the religious festival for political propaganda.

Militant Muslims react by making Muslim religious processions during Moharram more and more aggressive while the not so militant react by going deeper into a Muslim shell and turning to religious parties like the Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen when it comes to voting.

Last year, N.T. Rama Rao participated in the festivities and when the riots broke out and he was asked why he had decided to lend his patronage, he said that it was the Congress(I) 'legacy' which he had been forced to maintain for fear of a public outcry. In any case, in saffron robes and steeped in religion as he is, it would have been virtually impossible for him not to attend.

Hyderabad is not the only place where the introduction of militant new festivals has disrupted Hindu-Muslim amity. Year before last, in October-November there were three riots in Eastern UP of which two were caused by Hindu festivals, formerly unheard of in the area. In Tanda, the past five years or so have seen the emergence of Durga puja on a massive scale. This sleepy little UP town is in the heart of an area known as 'the land of Rama and Sita'. Therefore, how Durga puja has acquired such a hold is a mystery. Local people say it was first brought by the Bengalis who came to work in the thermal power station nearby. Once it arrived, it immediately got the active support of local RSS and BJP leaders so that now there is an idol of Durga on virtually every street corner.

The October riots, which resulted officially in over 20 dead, began because Durga worship clashed with a Moharram procession. The authorities, realizing that one of the idols had been placed in the direct path of the Moharram procession, persuaded the Durga worshippers to complete their ceremonies by midnight so that the Moharram procession could be let through. At the last minute, the Durga worshippers refused saying that because this was the last day of the festivities, worship had to continue all night. Tension built up as soon as the Muslims arrived with their 'taaziyas' and the local SDM tried to sort things out by drawing

a curtain in front of the idol to let the Muslims through.

The very next day, the BJP and their newly found Lok Dal friends got together and sent workers out into the villages (this is a Lok Dal stronghold) to spread the word that since Durga Mata had been insulted, no Muslim should be allowed to bury their 'taaziyas' at the end of Moharram.

Tanda has never had communal riots in the past and the real tragedy of what happened is that, probably for the first time in history, the troublemakers managed to spread communal hatred in the countryside. There was tension in several villages around Tanda but according to the villagers they had no problems with the people of their own village; 'it was people who came from Tanda on motorcycles who made the trouble'. In the village of Pakdi Bhojpur, a Hindu mob consisting of outsiders surrounded the local mosque and shouted 'kill them, kill them' all night. They also smashed a Muslim shrine while the local Muslims cowered in the mosque.

In the villages, nobody seemed to understand why they were suddenly supposed to hate Muslims. Most Hindus said that they had always lived in perfect peace and still participated in each other's festivals. In many cases it was Hindus who protected Muslims from the mobs who came from Tanda and in some villages it was Hindus who finally took the 'taaziyas' out in procession and buried them since the Muslims were not being allowed to do so.

But, the poison that spread from Tanda and the memories of that year will leave a permanent scar. Where the main Hindu religious festival has for centuries been Dussehra, with its message of the might of goodness, it has now become Durga puja with its message of 'shakti'.

In Maunath Bhanjan, a small and prosperous textile town on the edge of Eastern UP, not only has a new festival been introduced in the past five years but a form of worship has practically been invented. On Diwali when Hindus worship in their homes, in Maunath Bhanjan they erect idols of the goddess Laxmi in

the streets and worship her in much the same way as Durga is propitiated with public demonstrations of religious fervour. The statues are then taken to the nearest stream and immersed ceremonially. Riots began when the procession passed an Idgah and a stone was thrown at the Laxmi worshippers.

Despite a very distinct pattern emerging from the communal riots, there has been no attempt at all to try and understand what is causing them and how they can be stopped. All that we get from the Home Ministry are statistics which confirm that since 1977 there has been an 'upward trend'. To quote the *Indian Express*, 'According to a Home Ministry note, as many as 297 persons were killed in communal disturbances in the first five months this year (1984) and 1858 were injured as compared to 202 killed in the whole of 1983 and 238 in 1982. These figures do not include the Assam figures. Until May this year, 156 communal incidents took place in various parts of the country, while in 1983 the number of incidents was 404 and the previous year it was 474. In 1981, there were 319 incidents involving 196 killed and 2613 injured.'

Apart from political patronage of religion, the absence of any proper analysis of the causes and a lack of special security forces to deal with communal riots, one of the main reasons for the increase is that almost nobody ever gets punished.

In Nellie, where even by official figures 865 people, mainly women and small children, were massacred, not one single person was punished. At the time of the massacre, 130 arrests were made but one year later no charges had been made, no action taken. If this can happen in Nellie, what hope is there for Bhindranwale, Bombay or poor, remote Tanda?

Last year, as if there were not enough problems already, more were generated by the government's decision to allow the famous Ekamata procession to wander through the length of the country with their *ganga jal* and talk of Hindu unity. Why are these processions being allowed? Why does Bal Thackeray,

who talks in exactly the same language as Bhindranwale, have so many friends among Congress (I) leaders?

These and similar questions were often asked by Sant Jarnail Singh and his friends in the Golden Temple. Bhindranwale frequently said that when Hindu leaders made anti-Sikh statements nobody seemed to notice them and that the only reason why there was an uproar every time he said anything was because he was a Sikh in a Hindu country. Herminder Singh Sandhu on one occasion said, 'They have Hindu prayers when they launch Rohini (the satellite) and they tell us that we are a secular country.'

Bhindranwale's views can be discounted because he was an extremist but these are questions that need to be answered. Since Operation Blue Star there has been endless talk about the danger of mixing religion with politics and there has been outright condemnation of the Akali Dal, but what about Santa Singh? Is mixing religion with politics to become yet another prerogative of the ruling party?

The Congress Party was for many years the last real bastion of secularism. While the Akalis appealed to the Sikhs and the BJP to the Hindu and the Muslim League to the Muslims, it remained above all this. Today, in keeping with its own twisted understanding of secularism, it has begun to use Islam with the Muslims, Sikhism with the Sikhs and of course everyone knows about the mighty Hindu vote.

The ruling party's blatantly religious politics has reached such a frightening extent that even someone like Charan Singh, who had an alliance with the BJP, could say at a public meeting in Delhi some months ago, 'The Prime Minister is using communalism to get votes. If she stays in power for another ten years there will be no India.'

It is, however, not simply a question of Mrs. Gandhi having used religion: it is a question of all political leaders using it these days. NTR not only wears the robes of a Hindu monk, but he also wants to make Tirupati into a Hindu vatican and

anoint himself pope. Any number of political leaders today begin their speeches and public meetings with the recitation of Sanskrit shlokas and the opposition, given half a chance, is not averse to going for the Hindu vote either.

In the aftermath of Operation Blue Star, many said that they would have liked to condemn army action at the Golden Temple but could not do so for fear of alienating their constituents. Chandra Shekhar who did have the courage to speak out said that a whispering campaign was started against him in his constituency and Hindus were being told that he was anti-Hindu.

Where all this is going to lead is anybody's guess but for the present one thing is clear — never before has secularism been more seriously under threat and if there is no secularism, there is no India.

Nineteen eighty-four — surely the worst year for the country since Independence — is over but it has left behind memories of such hatred, violence and pain that India goes into 1985 with a feeling of fear and uncertainty. Rajiv Gandhi's first address to the nation, his attempts to put together a 'clean and efficient' cabinet and his talk of taking India into the 21st century have created the faintest stirrings of hope but, until there are some signs of the Punjab problem being over, the feeling of uncertainty will remain.

The words 'Punjab problem' are really a euphemism since they suggest that everything will be alright once a few moderate Akali leaders are released and persuaded to sign some sort of agreement that would meet some of the Akali demands. In fact, however, such an agreement would make only a marginal difference to what has now come to be the Punjab problem.

The so-called Punjab problem, which would be better described as the Hindu-Sikh problem, is the most important challenge before the new Prime Minister because if it is resolved then it could provide, once and for all, the key to resolving the whole question of religion and communalism.

So far Rajiv Gandhi has not shown that he understands fully that without secularism there is no India and that secularism today is more threatened than it has ever been before. It is true that in his first speech to the nation he asserted that 'An ideological battle against communalism and fanaticism must be waged in our schools and universities, in our workplaces and in our media' but this statement came at the end of an election campaign in which he showed no qualms whatsoever about using Punjab and the Sikhs as a bogeyman to frighten good Hindus into voting for the Congress (I).

It was a campaign which began on a very worrying note when at his first public meeting in Delhi he chose to dismiss the anti-Sikh violence that followed his mother's assassination, as 'tremors caused by the falling of a big tree.' He also chose to say nothing when a large section of his audience jeered and hooted because Delhi's Sikh mayor tried to make a speech. By the end of the election campaign most Hindu communal organisations had begun to view him as the man who would finally usher in a Hindu Rashtra.

The RSS newspaper, *Organiser*, in its January 6, 1985 issue, described the Congress(I) victory as 'A massive Hindu mandate' saying that 'It was a conscious Hindu vote, consciously and deliberately solicited by the Congress(I) as a Hindu party. And this is what steered the party to a grand victory, decimated the 'revisionist' BJP and reincarnated Cong(I) as BJP, rather, the old Jana Sangh, for all practical electoral purposes.'

Rajiv Gandhi himself does not accept that his massive victory was due only to the communal polarization of the electorate. He pointed out at his first press conference after the elections that it was clear from the results that not only Muslims but even Sikhs had voted for his party. Whether this is true or not, there is no question that a dangerous amount of communalization has taken place. During the campaign it was possible to find peasants even in remote, inaccessible villages who

talked about how 'the Punjabis' (quite often the distinction between Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus was not made) were traitors and how they had tried to break up the country. At the same time, wherever there were Sikhs, there seemed to be an overwhelming feeling that they no longer thought of themselves as completely Indian.

The Prime Minister, in his January 5 broadcast to the nation said, 'Secularism is the basis of our unity. Communalism and all other narrow loyalties are incompatible with unity.' He also said, 'We must go beyond the prevention and suppression of violence. We must cure the minds where hatred and prejudice arise and grow. We must take the campaign for unity to every village and every street of every town.'

What he appears, however, not to have realized yet is that secularism begins at home and that unless he and his party can prove that they themselves are ruthlessly secular, he cannot afford to preach to anybody else. Secularism does not mean equality of religion: it means being devoid of religion. In a personal sense it means that if the Prime Minister and his cabinet wish to visit temples, mosques or gurdwaras, then they must do so privately and not under the glare of television cameras. In a political sense it must come to mean that the ruling party should refuse to ally with religious or communal parties whether it be the Muslim League in Kerala or the Akali Dal in Punjab.

They must also refuse to conduct political business with priests. If the Akali Dal can find only priests to negotiate for them, then the government should refuse to oblige, but, for its own part, it must guarantee that in future there would be no more Santa Singhs and Dharendra Brahmacharis. The new government should keep in mind that the ghastly events caused by the Punjab problem were set in motion by the official patronage of only one priest.

There is another thing that Rajiv Gandhi would do well to remember when he talks in future of unity and integrity. India is not a country; it

is a continent consisting of several cultural identities. It is only when these identities are threatened that India's unity is threatened. Regionalism is not a threat to the country's unity; it is the glue that is holding it together. Mrs. Gandhi once said in an interview to Tariq Ali that she thought the biggest threat to India was regionalism. This was a dangerous misconception which probably arose from the fact that Mrs. Gandhi often thought of threats to her own party as being threats to India. We can only hope that our new Prime Minister is not as terrified of regionalism as his mother was.

So far he has shown a tendency to make the same mistakes as she did. In his January 5 broadcast he said, when talking about education, 'Our schools and colleges should acquaint the younger generations with India's ancient heritage and culture. The curricula and textbooks should curb parochial and communal interpretations of our composite culture.' He would have shown greater understanding if he had talked of India's ancient cultures and its diverse heritage. And what is 'a parochial and communal interpretation'? What for that matter is our 'composite culture'? The extremists in the Golden Temple considered it communal that textbooks prescribed for 8th class school children in Delhi said that Guru Govind Singh had fought the Moghuls because they killed his father. A parochial interpretation in this case would probably have been more accurate.

The election results show that Rajiv Gandhi has more goodwill than almost any other prime minister since 1947 and he certainly has a bigger mandate than anyone else. He is right to a large extent when he says that the people have voted for the future. There is a genuine desire in the heart of the average Indian to see this country move into the 21st century. For India, let it be a 21st century in which God takes a back-seat and sectarian violence becomes something that one can only read about in textbooks. Even if the harshest measures need to be taken, let there be no hesitation. It is better, in the end, for ten killers to be hanged than for us to have to live through another Tirlokpuri massacre.

Erosion of institutions

VINOD MEHTA

THE Bombay branch of the PUCL (People's Union for Civil Liberties) is an active and adventurous chapter of the parent organisation, ever ready to collect concerned citizens for a meeting or a debate. In the last few months, however, the Bombay PUCL has been confronted with an unusual problem: how to keep pace with the turmoil in the country? While they were still working out the modalities of a discussion on the Punjab crisis, Kashmir happened; while they were getting together some legal experts to examine the 'draconian' powers the government had acquired in Punjab through ordinances, Andhra happened. While the drama in Andhra was being played, the 'system change' debate surfaced. Eventually, PUCL decided that the only way they could get a discussion going on the state of the nation was to have an omnibus subject: 'Assaults on democracy'.

The dilemma of the PUCL in Bombay makes an appropriate metaphor for the subject—the erosion of institutions. One could quite legitimately ask: which institutions? Are any functioning ones left? Erosion implies that the edifice, though shaky, still stands, that only wear and tear has taken place, damage which *can* be repaired. Can even the

most sanguine citizen reach that conclusion today?

Examples to highlight the decay in institutions are not difficult to find; mine because of geographical necessity, will be based on experiences of living in western India. While specifics may differ from region to region, the over-all perspective I believe has a universality for most Indians.

Let us begin with the civil service. One constantly reads and hears of how this 'jewel in the crown' has been emasculated. The 'best and the brightest' are no longer, it seems, interested in the IAS; their eyes, ears and, specially, pockets are set on Hindustan Lever or an advertising agency. We are then told that of course the government cannot compete with multinationals in material and creature comforts; that the 'will to serve' is missing: the present generation, lacking the idealism of an earlier generation, has only 'expectations', no 'responsibilities'. And so on. The argument is completely fallacious. There are any number of young people just out of university or technical institutions more than willing to accept a lower standard of living so that they can get 'involved'. It is a miracle, considering the cynicism and sense of

hopelessness which pervades national life, that there are people still left who feel that the fortunes of the nation are retrievable.

The case of a young civil servant working in Maharashtra provides a good example. He is called Arun Bhatia and it is more than likely that his name means nothing to people living in, say, Calcutta or Madras. In Maharashtra, however, he is something of a legend — and a thorn in the flesh of the government. Wherever he is posted, Bhatia manages to unearth cases of public corruption. In Dhulia he exposed the cheating in the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS); money that should have gone to the poor and the unemployed found its way into the pockets of local politicians, from where it passed into the pockets of politicians who were not so local. Arun Bhatia had all the documentation to prove his case and when he found that his superiors refused to take cognisance, he discreetly passed on the information to the press. He was promptly transferred.

In his subsequent job, which was in Bombay, he dug up a multicore building racket which involved prominent members of Bombay's underworld and also pointed damagingly towards the chief minister and his ambitious and colourful wife. It came to be known as the 'FSI scandal' and for months the papers were full of it. Not a single denial emerged from the government; instead an attack was mounted on Bhatia suggesting that he was 'publicity crazy'. Not surprisingly, Bhatia was transferred again, but only after the government decided to sue the papers which had carried details of the scandal. At a press conference, when the chief minister, Vasantdada Patil, was asked how he justified Bhatia's transfer, Patil replied without a trace of irony. 'It is a promotion', but then couldn't resist adding, 'Let him go and make mischief elsewhere.' In the eyes of the Maharashtra government anyone who exposes corruption is a mischief maker!

Bhatia's case is unusual and commendable because he did not simply 'accept', with a I-can't-do-anything-about-it attitude, the venality in his department. Many an honest civil servant has been driven to this state

of despair because he feels he has neither the muscle nor the stamina to take on the 'system'. Arun Bhatia has taken on the system, risking his life (he has received physical threats) and his job. And if his past record is anything to go by, he will continue to do so.

The goings-on in our police force have reached such a state that the 'common man' now expects only harassment from it. The Police Commissioner of Bombay, J.F. Rebiero, an amiable and candid man, ties himself in the most pathetic knots as he attempts to justify the 'parallel economy' the police have nurtured for their sustenance. 'How can my cops be honest?' asks Rebiero, and then presents a long catalogue of constable woes to justify their dishonesty.

Much more dangerous than police corruption is police communalism. Some months ago we had Hindu-Muslim riots in Bombay. In certain localities the presence of the police inspired palpable terror among the inhabitants — and when they moved out and the army moved in people clapped, cheered and threw flowers at the in-coming troops.

Those who live in Delhi will have their own tales about political interference in the force. I can only cite the case of Maharashtra. In the last four years we have had three chief ministers. Almost the first thing each of these worthies did on assuming office was to get his own commissioner and inspector-generals in. Always, the acid test was 'loyalty'—to the incumbent. One frequently hears that so-and-so police officer is Antulay's man or Bhosale's man. 'You have to be somebody's man if you have to survive,' a senior police officer told me last year. He had learned to live with the system.

Presently, our Parliament and assemblies have only impressive structures. The facade is deceptively tranquil (who would believe seeing the erect, dignified and solemn Hyderabad assembly that inside honourable members were 'tearing out' microphones). And the ceremonial aspect is properly 'constitutional'. In between, however, events

close to wrestling bouts are on display. Chappal-throwing, foul language, physical combat have become the order of the day.

No serious business is ever conducted inside the house; the government sees to it that vital matters are discussed outside Parliament by caucuses. The founding fathers had other ideas. They envisaged that weighty legislation would be enacted in these hallowed chambers, that the representatives of the people would speak fearlessly and knowledgeably, that great debate would be initiated.

Alas, none of this is happening, and as our editorial writers frequently lament, legislatures are in 'a sorry state'. It would be easy and tempting to fix the blame for this decline entirely on what was Mrs Gandhi's party; however, the opposition must also share the blame. No one who has seen Raj Narain in action inside Parliament can ever absolve the opposition. Not surprisingly, legislatures are invariably empty with less than a third of the members in attendance at any given time. You need a confidence motion or a three-line whip to get the herd in, and then they come on stretchers and wheel-chairs.

On the few occasions I have been to the Lok Sabha not only have the proceedings been deadly dull (and trivial), but they have been distinguished by considerable amounts of ignorance. No one, including the prime minister, comes prepared; thus, there is endless prevarication and pathetic fumbling. In the Nehru era, and even after, Parliament sparkled with eloquence, rhetoric, intelligence, wit.... These days all you hear is ah, ahem, well, I really can't say, I was misquoted....

In Himachal Pradesh they tell a piquant story about a well-known native son. It seems that evil and malevolent spirits had entered his body causing him considerable physical and mental anguish. So Ram Lal sought the services of an exorcist. Alas, all the evil spirits — there were reportedly eight in number — could not be cast out due to an urgent summons from Delhi for the possessed politician.

Was it the remaining solitary evil spirit which influenced Ram Lal, when he was governor of Andhra Pradesh, to wreak the constitutional havoc that he did? Or was it simply another symptom of our times? When you have governors like A.P. Sharma, Homi Talyerkhan, Jagmohan, Chenna Reddy and Ram Lal, is it any wonder that the symbolic and respected office of governor is openly derided and mocked.

There was a time when a governorship was a reward for meritorious service to the nation. A public servant who had served the country with distinction was allowed to spend the evening of his years in relative comfort. It was never an arduous or exacting job because at times of crisis the incumbent had clear and precise precedents for guidance.

All that has gone by the board. The new breed of governors are ferociously ambitious men who have opted out of politics (some not so voluntarily) but only for a few years. Or they may be 'inconvenient' — like Antulay in Maharashtra who, if he was not up to his neck in legal wranglings, would surely be gifted with a governorship. Thus, not only are these individuals discredited, they are itching for Lok Sabha and assembly seats — because that is where the pickings are. One can understand A.P. Sharma's haste to leave Calcutta and file his Rajya Sabha nomination papers in Patna, such haste that he almost forgot to tell the chief minister of West Bengal that he was relinquishing his post.

When the Janata Party put out a White Paper detailing the pernicious and partisan role of governors in the past decade or so, the response to the 'revealing' statistics (Operation Topple began in Kerala in 1959, when the democratically elected Communist government was sacked) both from the press and the public was tepid. You are not going to shock anyone in the country today by telling them that the governor is no longer an impartial functionary, a neutral referee doing the Constitution's bidding. Everyone knows he is an employee of the centre — and if he has any 'funny ideas' about

his role he will quickly be out of a job.

As an institution, the army has probably survived with the least damage. But here too the growing politicisation is ominous. The sight of the army top brass negotiating with the five-head priests of the Golden Temple on what were clearly political matters without the help of civilian advisors is a new and disturbing development. It is one thing to ask the army to help drive the extremists out of holy places, but once you ask them to decide the terms and conditions of their withdrawal you are treading on extremely dangerous ground.

It is a fact that in the North-East the army has been performing a civilian and a military role. That is bad enough, but to deploy them, as in Punjab, for an extended period is hazardous both for the army and the civil authority. How long will India's army, allegedly the envy of the third world, remain apolitical? Not for long if at the drop of a hat it is pressed into duties which legitimately fall in the ambit of the police and para-military forces. Already it is becoming the norm during Hindu-Muslim riots to call in the army. Is it reasonable in these circumstances to expect the soldier not to be infected with the communal virus.

The conventional wisdom in the ruling party and in certain 'motivated' quarters is that all the institutions which make up the democratic polity in India have outlived their usefulness. Their 'lack of performance' — a choice Congress(1) phrase — is attributed to the fact that they are colonial in origin and thus unable to withstand the stresses and strains inherent in a society still 'trying to break the shackles of imperial rule.' Indeed, it is frequently asserted that most of our troubles emanate from our blind allegiance to these institutions. Have not the courts always thrown out 'progressive legislation'? What could be more antediluvian than a judiciary which takes its inspiration from the House of Lords?

No one among this group of vociferous and busy proselytisers ever considers the reverse of this

argument: perhaps it is not the institutions which are at fault but the people who run them. So the cry goes out at regular intervals: Let us have a new system and new institutions. Like the fairy godmother with her magic wand, this new system will lead us to a brave and prosperous world where there is no hunger, no communalism, no Bhindranwale...

Naturally, no one has any clear idea which system is going to deliver these often promised but never delivered goods. The French or the American? The Chinese? Or should we go in for the kind of limited democracy practised in Singapore and South Korea? Or perhaps we need another dose of the 1975 'bitter medicine', without the excesses, of course?

That the so-called system change debate is completely bogus can be gauged from the abundant confusion that prevails in the minds of the system changers. Our present system and the institutions that sustain it are not sacrosanct, but any attempt at slight or major modification must be preceded by a degree of national consensus which can only be reached through debate and discussion that is both honest and comprehensive.

Incidentally, one thing the system changers forget. Whatever style of government is adopted, some institutions will have to be forged. Norms, however tentative, will have to be followed, since even the most 'flexible' of systems needs some kind of discipline. What Vasant Sathe and people of his ilk actually want are institutions which 'work', but which they can continually subvert to suit the preservation and progress of their professional careers.

Where, then, does the buck stop? If our institutions are in such a terrible state, who is responsible? Mrs Gandhi? The culture of politics in post-independence India? Hindu society? I remember some years ago spending a long and fascinating evening listening to V.S. Naipaul expound his favourite thesis: India was an 'Area of Darkness' not because of Mrs Gandhi or sundry ignorant politicians, but because a 'wounded' and 'rotting' civilisation

was unable to find a place in the 20th century comity of nations.

There is much merit in this dissertation. The spiritual and social crisis in our society has no doubt a substantial bearing on our difficulties. However, if we can come back to *terra firma* and examine our travails with a narrower focus, then a simple and straight-forward conclusion is inescapable: Mrs Gandhi and her party have played such havoc with all the institutions that make up our social fabric that the present mood of despair and cynicism is unavoidable. Indira Gandhi is the principal culprit because it is in the last two decades that the injury to institutions has been most grievous. No doubt Morarji Desai and his merry band of Janata men contributed their mite to the downward trend, but their potential for mischief was limited since they only frolicked with power for less than two years.

Is there any hope? Supposing Chandra Shekhar or Atal Behari Vajpayee or a comrade from Kerala or West Bengal was to occupy 1, Safdarjung Road, would things be any different? Would we then not hear the same stale and dishonest charges against the judiciary, the press, parliament, civil service.... Probably yes; the tone may be different, the hysteria less orchestrated, but bad habits die hard. Vajpayee and Chandra Shekhar are after all products of the same political culture that gave birth to Shiv Shankar, Pranab Mukherjee and Ghani Khan Chowdhury.

What we need (and will probably never get) is a new kind of politician, not one who is an 'idealist' or given to self-sacrifice, but one who understands that the institutions which exist today are not inimical to his existence; in fact they can partly help him achieve his stated political goals.

Institutions are like tender plants. They need nurturing and care. If that attention is provided they will flourish and bear fruit. Perhaps we should remember that in India it is not institutions which have let the country down; it is politicians who have let institutions down.

A servile press

SUDIP MAZUMDAR

'Apart from its (*Young India*) duty of drawing attention to injustices to individuals, it will devote its attention to constructive satyagraha as also cleansing satyagraha. Cleansing satyagraha is a civil resistance where resistance becomes a duty to remove a persistent and degrading injustice such as Rowlatt Act.'

—Mahatma Gandhi in his first editorial as the editor of *Young India*, on October 8, 1919.

'Civil liberty and freedom of the press consist in our permitting what we do not like, in our putting up with criticisms of ourselves, in our allowing public expression of views which seem to us even to be injurious to our cause itself.'

—Jawaharlal Nehru, in a letter to Tushar Kanti Ghosh, editor, on March 4, 1940.

DURING the past one year several big events took place in India which through diverse challenges posed several important questions before the media. The Hindu-Muslim riots in Bhiwandi, the storming of the Golden Temple and the crackdown in Punjab, the assassination of Indira Gandhi, the massacre of Sikhs, the Bhopal gas tragedy, the general election and the spy scandal — all of them proved to be major news events which put media credibility and professionalism to the test. They also indicated the state of the health of the profession and its failings.

The present discussion involves the state of the press and basically the English language press which, notwithstanding its relatively narrower reach, has assumed noticeable importance over the years. Radio and television, being extensions of government departments, offer a predictably subservient role.

Two distinct features can be noticed in the press during the last

few years. First, a number of new publications, both newspapers and periodicals, have been started and most of them have survived. Second, with a few exceptions, the press largely has been lacking in making journalism more meaningful to the process of change in society. That new journals hit the stands and survive is proof of the fact that there is a demand for them and an indication of the people's hunger for information. This is undoubtedly a convincing sign of the viability of the print medium. The growth in the number of journals has unfortunately not been able to raise the quality of journalism. Many of them are slick and well-produced but they remain conventional and status quoist in their approach.

It would be worthwhile to see at this point how the government which happens to be the mightiest manipulator of information treated the press in the post-Emergency period. Under Mrs Gandhi all democratic processes got severe setbacks as she continued to concentrate power in her hands and demanded 'loyalty' from all. She grew increasingly intolerant about the press and that reflected in her utterance about the press.

The government enacted a series of laws and took executive action which was aimed at stifling criticism and threatening the non-conformist. The censorship in Punjab, the move to impose a levy on the import of newsprint, the bullying remarks of the Congress bosses and many other acts have sought to intimidate the press so that it does not fall out of tune with government rhapsody. Rulers like Arun Nehru have a more direct approach. Arun Nehru is reported to have said on two occasions that the press should 'behave' and the sooner it does, the better for it.

It is difficult to decipher why Arun Nehru, a backdoor entrant in the power palace, should get angry with the press that has, even by chance, not taken up an adversary role, a role staunchly upheld by Gandhi and Nehru. The press has over the years developed a comfortable relationship with the powerful in society, be they in government, business or

politics. The press and the authorities in the country behave as if they were complementary, as if their tasks were the same. This convergence of interests has not only sterilised the Indian press but has made it irrelevant to the harsh realities of Indian society.

That the people in power will misuse and abuse power is a fact proven daily by innumerable instances of governmental and bureaucratic actions. In a society like ours what else can be the motive force behind a professedly public institution like the press other than to protect the interests of the people and raise their awareness to fight injustice.

On the whole, the press tries not to incur the wrath of authority and, in the process, it has devoted tonnes of newsprint to inane issues, carefully avoiding the serious ones. The policy of appeasement has exposed the entire profession to danger of fatal encroachment.

Three events will illustrate the point. First, the assassination of Mrs Gandhi. Immediately after her death, a carefully planned massacre of the Sikhs took place in the country. Even as innocent Sikhs were being butchered in their homes in the Capital, most newspapers remained shockingly inadequate in reporting the true dimensions of the pogrom. And, even when they reported the killings, the reports appeared disjointed pieces of information which did not help much in forming the whole picture. City newspapers detailed one or two reporters to handle the coverage of the killings.

Some reporters, on personal initiative, tried to describe and link the events. But they were only a handful. That is why, while newspapers wrote about mass killings in Trilokpuri, hardly anyone reported similar ghastly incidents in Palam Vihar and Sultanpuri. Many newspapers treated the carnage as a routine riot story. But it was not. That Congress leaders and their wardheelers provoked much of the killings and bloodshed was proven by investigations of civil liberties organisations.

The scars of this pogrom are raw and putrefying for anyone to see. For the government, healing of wounds, it seems, is not on the priority list. And the attitude of the mainline press is not entirely different. Or else, why should the subject disappear from most newspapers.

Not only that, a national newspaper even wrote front-page editorials which many thought were purely Hindu communalist outbursts. The government tried to mislead the press and the public and it resisted all demands for a judicial inquiry into the killings. The carnage and the following misery and destitution of thousands of Sikhs is an inescapable reality and it is closely related to the problem of Punjab. The government adamantly refuses to acknowledge the significance of the issue. And the press takes the cue and keeps quiet, apart from making an occasional grunt.

This attitude has affected the credibility of the press. It is a sad commentary on the media when people turn to the BBC for 'authentic' news. The absence of pride in professionalism leads the press to treat attacks on it lightly. A case in point. When two civil rights organisations, PUCL (People's Union for Civil Liberties) and PUDR (People's Union for Democratic Rights), moved the High Court to get a judicial inquiry instituted into the killings of Sikhs, a judge, Justice Yogeshwar Dayal, in the course of arguments in open court, referred to journalists as 'wretched'. Barring one newspaper, no other daily reported the observation of the judge which seriously undermines the entire profession. There was no professional response to the attack. Only two reporters of the *Indian Express*, again purely on personal initiative, protested against the remark and that too went unnoticed in the press.

The second instance is the coverage of the general election. Reporters assigned to cover the elections went out and reported routine facts like the number of candidates, number of electorate, its complexion, but there was very little commentary on the rotting state of electoral politics and the murky power play. Most of the

reporting was devoted to speeches, statements, accusations and counter-accusations of the candidates.

A section of the press went further and started predicting poll outcomes. When the results were announced, the press found itself terribly off the mark. Soon analyses on why the press 'failed' started, as if predictions were its task. There was no emphasis on analysing the fake claims in manifestoes. Blatant abuse of power expressed through instances like denial of Harijans to vote in Charan Singh's constituency and recovery of stamped ballot papers in Rajiv's constituency was not reported by many newspapers. In short, the press looked at the election almost the same way as the political parties fighting for power did and gave the lie to its role that the press should inform the people to raise their awareness.

The third and most disturbing instance is the near total institutional silence over attacks on individual journalists by both the government and vested interests. The killing of Chabirani Mahapatra, a journalist's wife in Orissa, is forgotten. In Banda, a local journalist, Suresh Gupta, was killed by the police for exposing fake encounters. It is a fact not even known to many journalists. Reporters trying to make their job meaningful which always involves inviting the displeasure of people in power, have constantly been threatened. These have failed to make the headlines or become urgent issues before the profession.

The shocking case of Brahma Chellaney needs a little elaboration. Chellaney, a reporter with the Associated Press, is now facing charges of sedition and his passport has been impounded. Through his reports, the government contends, Chellaney promoted hatred between Hindus and Sikhs, hurt the religious sentiments of a community, violated censorship rules and committed sedition. The charges if proved can send him to jail for life.

of his reports he said that 'several of more than 1000 Sikh militants killed in Amritsar were shot at point blank range by troops who first tied their hands behind their backs.' This report appeared in many western papers including the *London Times*. Four months after the report appeared, the Punjab police came to Delhi in October to arrest Chellaney. He moved the court and got anticipatory bail. He is still facing the charges and has already been interrogated both in Amritsar and Delhi by the police for several hours. The police also want to know who are the sources for his story.

Apart from passing a few resolutions, no serious protest has been mounted by the press in this case. The press conveniently forgot the fact that the Chellaney case raises several serious journalistic questions. It is not that Chellaney wrote something new or exclusive. Similar reports have appeared in Indian papers also. Not only that, how could reports appearing in western papers promote hatred between two communities in Punjab? Here is a journalist who is being terrorised to disclose his sources and the press as a whole does not consider it an encroachment on its rights.

If this is the response of the press to attacks on itself, one can imagine how it is going to protect the interests of the powerless. We have in this country a notorious Official Secrets Act that was enacted by the British to suppress dissent and withhold information. The Act which virtually makes all communication about government activities official secrets is liberally used to deny information to the people. The worst sufferer of the Act is the press itself. Yet there has been no movement to get the Act amended so that government control over information is loosened and people have access to relevant information.

The servility of the press to power and authority has led it to legitimise many of the questionable actions of the State, even when it is not called upon to do so. This is a real danger from within. The need for a vigilant and people's interest-oriented press has never been felt so acutely before.

What did Chellaney do? He was one of the reporters who stayed back in Amritsar when the army stormed the Golden Temple. In one

Double talk/double think

BHARAT KARNAD

WHEN 1984 dawned, there were apprehensions about the Orwellian spectre. That was a mis-read. Unbenownst to most, India and Indians had long ago been absorbed in a competing nightmare—the Wonderland charted by Lewis Carroll. The one that Alice got lost in. Then again it could be we are trapped in the wondrous academy of Lagado encountered by Gulliver in his travels. It is difficult to be sure. When reality so closely resembles poison-laced whimsy, satire loses its edge and a writer his compass. Had Carroll and Jonathan Swift lived to make an Indian journey in this day and age, they would have been stumped for words.

The difference between the three visions is less than meets the eye — all of them being premised on the belief that hypocrisy corrupts and absolute hypocrisy corrupts absolutely. What prevails in India is not mere hypocrisy of manners. Or, of language. It is something both deeper and surer. It is hypocrisy geared solely to making virtue of pretence, as an end in itself.

It is difficult to know whence pretence as an other-worldly notion strung out between spiritual attainment and moral self-assurance became a national preoccupation. Per chance it came from the days of the early orientalist in the West who were so over-whelmed by the jumble of alien stimuli, but mostly by the spectacle of a placid people wallowing in misery, they gave us the benefit of their doubt and, to our delight, pronounced us eminently superior in god-hankering and similar spiritual pursuits.

How else to explain the rank fatalism of a people ravaged by every form of pestilence from disease to bad rulers, except by a theory which suggested that suffering ennobles and, in the Christian sense, puts one nearer God? This theory and this occidental view of Indians gave us a handle on the world. It is not altogether coincidental that the Mahatma — the slyest practitioner of hardboiled politics this side of Metternich—pounced on it, conceiving of *satyagraha*, which by his own admittance is a concept with roots less in Hinduism than in Christianity.

The ethos of conspicuous self-abnegation he bequeathed to the Congress Party, successful as it was in wearing out the British, was considered by its progenitor as capable of great mischief. The reason why Gandhi counselled the disbandment of the Congress Party soon after Independence. By then it was too late to stop Gandhism from becoming a growth industry and a touchstone for politics.

But, Gandhism like Hinduism is a plastic notion. Anyone, whatever his actual religious beliefs, rituals and practices, can claim he is a Hindu. So can anyone claim he is a Gandhian. It is the easiest way for an Indian to write his ticket into politics, without pain or experience of harsh regimen and with only passing acquaintance with austerity.

Thus the honourable F.M. Khan, the erstwhile Cong (I) bigwig from Karnataka, for example, with a legendary weakness for liquor, ladies, and *lafdas*, can maintain with a perfectly straight face that he is a 'follower of Mahatma Gandhi.' Now certainly the Mahatma experimented with truth and occasionally with no-nos. A little cosying up to Kasturba at nightfall here, a mouthful of meat there, and the Mahatma was reconstituting his theology. His latter day *chela*, the redoubtable Khan, was more purposive. He launched a 'hunger strike' to protest, he said, the dire straits his party was in. It was a stunt to regain access to Indiramma, said his detractors. The purificatory and penance aspect of his action was lost in the maze of ludicrous self-promotion. Mr. Khan was not the first to turn Gandhism into a *tamasha* and he won't be the last.

Is there an Indian politician alive who has not done the obligatory fast, surrounded by garlands and henchmen with appropriately mournful countenance in a multi-coloured *shamiana* on the Boat Club premises? Is there a pol today who does not sport the 'Gandhi cap' or does not publicly sing the praises of *khadi* and prohibition, or urge the people to return to the traditional values espoused by the Mahatma, even though his personal tastes run to tonsorial fashion, wors-

teds and Scotch? Is there a *neta* around who does not partake of, what the late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi called, the 'Congress Culture'?

What does this Culture represent? If one were to go by the word, it is all things good and bountiful, of sacrifice and pain in the country's service. If the deed, the carryings-on of Congressmen, were the criteria, it is a synonym for the good life, of the spoils of power, patronage, of public resources marshalled for private good, of licence, in effect, to make whoopee at the people's expense.

It is often argued that this is so because of the Congress Party's uninterrupted years in office which has bred corruption. Others contend that the parliamentary form of government, which depends on a thorough understanding of their responsibility and conscientious work by our elected representatives, is a misfit in a society where power is distinguished by its abuse. Still others suggest that the fault lies in the 'ism'—socialism—we have taken to heart, which has resulted in the inefficient and non-productive 'license-control *raj*' or 'inspector *raj*' (depending on whom you like to quote—C. Rajagopalachari or Vice-President Venkataraman).

Whatever the state of the Congress Culture, there is no denying its popularity, with the people associating the Party with the Mahatma. It is an association that has legitimized grave sins of omission and commission. This after all is why revisionist historians blame 'the Father of the Nation' for rooting many of the most obvious ills in our society. What they probably mean is that, more than in any other country, in India the chasm between word and deed, ideology and practice and, ultimately, between thought and action is so wide as to be unbridgeable simply because 'Bapu' set impossible standards of conduct and conscience. Unable to achieve anything like the probity in public life that the Mahatma demanded, our leaders have done the next best thing—they have resorted to Gandhian-sounding cant and raised Gandhism to a pedestal the easier to

ignore it. The disregard of value-based politics which the Mahatma pushed being obscured by Double Talk/Double Think and populist gobbledygook.

The consequence of this is more damaging than is generally imagined. Double Talk and sophistry of this kind posits a level of intellectual activity focussed exclusively on the 'ought' rather than on the 'is'. It offers escape from reality into the realm of the abstract, into a land of make-believe where the machinery of State hums, milk and honey flow, and everything is hunky-dory. Enter the academe of Lagado habited by those involved in imaginative enterprises like the ingenious architect who, Gulliver discovered, 'had contrived a new method for building houses, by beginning at the roof and working downwards to the foundation.'

Those with the keen eye for architectural processes will immediately recognize how the construction of such an edifice parallels the setting up of 'Socialist India' from the top down. Socialism is a chimera and chimera as State policy is a peculiarly Indian innovation in government that has now been picked up by Master-Sergeants, Flight-Lieutenants, Colonels, Generals, Tribal Chiefs, *Kwalimus* with fly whisks, and assorted others who rule in the Third World. It helps endow bankrupt policies and sheer mis-management with grandeur. Mention 'socialism' and all errors are forgiven, because this 'ism' hints at something BIG—the greatest good for the greatest number in the shortest possible time, it implies social-engineering on a vast scale and grandiose schemes, it proclaims, as Jawaharlal Nehru did, an era of 'the modern temples of India'—imagery that neatly telescopes tradition and modernity.

But, more importantly, 'socialism' and the blinkered world-view it spawns, has a demonology that is just right. It is so much easier to scapegoat the neo-colonial West, the rapacious industrialised North for the mess that socialists of every stripe have got their poor countries into, than to switch solutions. The latter entails the leaders admitting they

were wrong. And in the developing world, where infallibility is a concomitant of power, it is easier to get the camel to pass through the eye of the needle.

The practical problems for Indian leaders to renounce socialist-populist ideology are in any case immense, not least because they derive their power from controls and regulations, and getting rid of these would be an act of self-abnegation they seem incapable of. Much as Rajiv Gandhi wants to remove the dead hand of government from slowing the pace of development in the country, he cannot do so with the expanding governmental apparatus in place. Briefly put, he cannot have socialism without the burdensome bureaucracy, albeit manned by 'technocrats' who are an improvement on the generalist-stocked cadres making a hash of things at present. But, because *babus* will be *babus*, we will continue having bureaucratic socialism that mainly benefits the *apparatchik* and the bosses. This explains why in India only the *babu* and the *neta* sing the praises of socialism.

The remarkable thing is how it goes unremarked that the muddle-headed socialism stressing the collectivity introduced by Nehru is in its essence at loggerheads with the emphasis the Mahatma put on the individual. It is therefore no wonder that the Congressethos is schizophrenic and our rulers like good Lagadons are much in need of reassurance that they are involved in doing something BIG, and momentous. Hence, the unending stream of sanctimonious swill spewing forth from the mouths of our leaders at every conceivable opportunity. When India began riding the moral high horse in international fora in the '50s, those the invective was aimed at, were furious. A decade later they were irritated. Twenty years on, they are indifferent. Frankly, my dears, they don't give a damn! Worse, the tables are turned on us. Third World success-stories like Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea are positively condescending, dismissing India as all talk and no action. Bloated rhetoric and self-serving spiels, it is not sufficiently well recognised by South Block, costs us plenty in self-respect.

Alas, self-respect is a curious thing—it rests on the sense of one's worth. Idi Amin was a certified loonie, an unreconstructed Yahoo and a buffoon, if ever there was one. He was dangerous precisely because he took himself seriously. India's hubris too exacts a price. To believe as our leaders do that we are somehow a superior people simply because of a Gandhi and a relatively nonviolent struggle for independence is their business. For them to externalise it, behave as if what happened two score years ago gives Indians the right to lecture others on morality, on what is right and wrong, is to open ourselves to ridicule abroad, and bring the country into disrepute.

But grand posturing and baroque rhetoric if expensive abroad is downright dangerous at home. Take that campaign slogan — 'Garibi Hatao'. It ought to have occurred to even the least sensible that if *garibi* were so easily *hatao*-able, someone would have *hatao*-ed it by then. But simplistic ideas concerning redistribution of wealth contained in, what Lord Bauer, the iconoclastic economist, calls, 'Ecclesiastical Economics', couched in still more rudimentary language produces catchy election slogans, perhaps, but also raises unrealistic expectations in the minds of the mostly unlettered citizenry of what a government can do. Congress(I), of course, lost credibility with the people when it failed to erase poverty from the landscape. But the polity lost more — the confidence of the people that it can deliver.

The flip side of our posturing is that our leaders are in the position of the Queen doling out the goodies to her subjects in the Wonderland, according to an unrivalled operating principle: 'Jam tomorrow and jam yesterday — but never jam today.'

Ad-men, apologists and sundry Double Talk-specialists can come up with a hundred different reasons why the millennia has been postponed to the tomorrow and massage the brittle national ego with statistics of this and that, and by tales of how the world capitals quiver expectantly in their socks at every new pro-

nouncement by New Delhi. All this is comfortable fiction uneasily masking the fact that the Indian system is unravelling in slow but sure stages. Play 'India rules the waves', Maestro, music to see the ship of State sink by!

A.M. Unkovsky, the provincial Marshal in the Nobility of Tuer observed in 1859 that the administration in the reign of Czar Alexander II had degenerated into 'one vast system of malfeasance raised to the dignity of state government.' This observation could apply to India after Nehru's death, the country having been taken over by younger leadership elements whose scruples need severe mending. In one sense this was inevitable. State socialism has produced, what Andre Gunder Frank said has eventuated in a quite different authoritarian context in Latin America—'lumpen development' propelled by the emergence of a 'lumpen bourgeoisie'.

'Lumpen' by definition is trash, the product of alienation brought on by the clash of feudal values and modernism in a largely traditional society. The growing masses of the alienated as well as those clawing to make it, are motivated by 'the pure ethic of absolute ends' articulated by Max Weber. It is an ethic in which the end justifies the means and *goonda* politics is the rule. The trouble is this is a short step from the *goonda* in politics.

Sure enough, Haji Mastan, the smuggler of renown and all round bad guy, founder of something called the *Dalit Muslim Alpasankhit Surakhsha Mahasangha*, is establishing a political presence in Bombay where the money is. How much longer, do you reckon, it will be before he corners power in Delhi?

The question is: will our decrepit system of sleaze and spoils, bereft of values and bright ideas, be able to resist the raw vitality and the blandishments of the Gundu Raos and the Antulays, the Mastans and the Jagannath Mishras—'the chance offspring', as Disraeli wrote of Lord Cottenham, the Lord Chancellor, 'of political agitation and factious intrigue'?

Books

THE ROLE OF THE STATE IN THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE OF INDIA by O.V.

Malyarov. New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1984.

PUBLIC SECTOR IN INDIA by R.N. Chopra.

New Delhi, Intellectual Publishing House, 1984.

ANTI-POVERTY RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA by T.S. Sundaram. New Delhi, D.K.

Publications, 1984.

THE work of Soviet scholars and researchers in the physical and natural sciences, including mathematics, is so creative and original that numerous laurels have naturally been bestowed on them. One is tempted to ask why the same genius is not manifested in the social sciences and history. Most of the Soviet output in this field has been governed by the dictates of Moscow's policy stands. Thus, whatever the Kremlin, at any point of time, perceived to be the situation, was faithfully transcribed by Soviet authors in their books. In certain fields, like military history for example, changing policy perceptions have resulted in comic results. Within a space of a decade, one has seen the images of Zhukov, Chuikov and Stalin do yo-yo acts in Soviet publications.

On India, the Kremlin has maintained a reasonably consistent line since the mid-fifties and the early sixties. The Russian evaluation of India and its polity has been a total reflection of the geopolitical weight of the country in Moscow's eyes. Having decided that the ruling party in India, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru, could be a useful ally in combating western thrusts in South Asia, the Soviets have continued to project India as a model progressive and socialistic

regime. Even 1975-77 could not shake Soviet conviction in this matter.

In this context, Malyarov's work is more of the same genre. The only surprise is that it has come under Vikas's masthead and not the usual PPH or APN. Originally published in Russian in 1978, it has been sought to be updated in terms of data. The author commences by attempting to describe the country's socio-economic structure at the end of the colonial period. The industrial sector at the time of independence was an amalgam of foreign and indigenous capital.

Curiously, Malyarov has not referred to either A.K. Bagchi or even Michael Kidron in his analysis of foreign investment in India prior to 1947. He tends to rely on Buchanan's 1934 work. Nevertheless, the author sketchily manages to establish the central features of the industrial sector in 1947: (i) a large, isolated foreign capital base, mainly in the non-productive branches, and (ii) a relatively well-established but highly concentrated indigenous capitalist structure which still played second fiddle to the former. Malyarov also underscores the point that the colonial environment greatly favoured the growth of big business.

Thereafter, there is a wealth of data on the State-induced development of the country's economy and industry in the Plan periods. Most of the data is secondary but is well-compiled and presented. The effort is largely descriptive and not nearly as analytical as one would have liked.

In the section on State regulation of the private sector, Malyarov touches a number of core issues and tantalisingly glides over them. The administrative control mechanisms like licensing, MRTP, FERA, capital issues control, import control etc., are briefly described and some conclusions drawn.

While licensing is described as having serious shortcomings as a control mechanism, the author does not say why. At one stage, he briefly describes the tactics of 'big business' in disguising its enterprises as independent units in order to penetrate the free spheres of the economy. There is no attempt to discuss the Joint Sector concept and official patronage to large houses to dodge the regulatory mechanisms via this route.

In the concluding section, Malyarov has a brief analysis of the nature of the Indian bureaucracy. In an attempt to dispel the notion of 'administrative neutrality', he gives interesting information on the scale of self-reproduction of IAS officers as well as the frustration of the experts and specialists in government service because of the disparities in their remuneration compared to their IAS counterparts. However, there is no consistent attempt to link up all these strands.

The conceptualisation of the socio-economic structure of independent India, particularly the Indian State, is always within the straightjackets of Muscovite Marxism. Unless this is clarified, Malyarov will not be able to answer his other main question: whose interest does the State capitalist sector (the public sector) serve? At one stage, Malyarov comes perilously close to providing a clue to his innermost thoughts. He postulates that the prime motivation of the public sector is the maximisation of the interests of the national bourgeoisie as a whole. This begs the central issue. Who is the national bourgeoisie? Is it a monolithic, homogenous group?

At the end of the day, the author ruefully admits that the State sector and State regulation actually foster 'the development of the country along capitalist lines.' In that case, therefore, one should question the validity of some or all of Malyarov's following conclusions regarding the 'progressive role' of Indian State capitalism: (i) it is the main factor in eliminating the economy's colonial features, (ii) it is the principal force for establishing the economic independence of the country, (iii) it is the primary 'locomotive' for accelerating the general pace of economic development, (iv) it is the main bulwark against foreign monopoly capital, and to some extent, Indian monopoly capital, and (v) it builds up certain structures which can be ultimately utilised for attaining socialism when the power structure changes.

These issues are the ones that deserve to be tackled head-on, but are not done so in the present volume. This is a pity, for the author provides enough evidence of his mental prowess. He has also done a fair amount of homework, not all of it from primary sources though. There are some minor proofreading omissions and certain inadvertent errors (*The Economic and Political Weekly* is listed as a Delhi publication). But the million-rouble question is whether, 67 years after the October Revolution, the Kremlin will allow Soviet social scientists to develop

their independent analytical frameworks for subjects like this, albeit within the overall Marxian umbrella.

If Malyarov tempts only in order to disappoint, Chopra doesn't quite take off. His book is a mixture of description, purposeless data and complicated prescription. There is no core theme or underlying pattern in this effort. If, viewed from Moscow, the role of the Indian public sector is enigmatic, no further clarity is obtained when the viewing platform shifts to Delhi. The semi-autobiographical portions relating to personal experiences of industrial relations in public sector undertakings are too limited and randomly selected to serve any meaningful purpose.

Sundaram's book, on the other hand, is a more cohesive and purposeful effort. He wants to know why the rural development programmes in India have not achieved their objectives of eradicating rural poverty and benefiting the poor. He then sets himself the task of recommending a set of conditions which would help the objectives to be attained.

After studying the various rural development programmes attempted so far, Sundaram concludes that rural poverty can only be tackled by changing the power structure, so that the poor can obtain access to the basic inputs which are required for their upliftment. These inputs are land, credit, raw materials, technical and managerial assistance and marketing of output. Each of these areas is analysed in reasonable detail after which Sundaram comes up with his action plan for integrated rural development.

While most of his recommendations are unexceptionable, the moot question is whether the existing socio-economic structure will permit these changes to take place. We are back to square one. Will the Indian State, as presently constituted, permit the institutional framework advocated by Sundaram? Or, to take the flip-side of the coin, what should be the changes in the Indian polity which would allow Sundaram's recommendations to be implemented? That, as they say, is another ball-game.

Jay Bhattacharjee

INDIA: The Seige Within by M.J. Akbar, Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1985.

'TO endeavour to understand the India of today, would be the task of a brave man. To describe tomorrow's India would verge on madness.' So said Jawaharlal Nehru, in the Maulana Azad Memorial Lecture, 1959.

How True!

We do seem on the verge of madness today. From the world's worst industrial disaster in Bhopal marked by a level of official ineptitude and callousness that would put any civilized country to shame; the murder of thousands of innocent Sikhs in a

space of 4 days as 'vengeance' for the assassination of Indira Gandhi; Bhiwandi, Baroda, Hyderabad, Jamshedpur, Moradabad, Aligarh and scores of other communal riots; Nellie which stands as a case apart; and the daily tribulations and butchery of the scheduled castes and tribes across the land — it does require both a brave and possibly a mad man to look at India's past and future with some confidence.

In Akbar, we have one such person. Well known journalist, now turned historian, Akbar's book, *The Seige Within*, explains as no other book has done, or so the blurb would have us believe, the resilient achievements of India's secular democracy as well as its vulnerability and failures. And Akbar does it well. The book, to say the least, is readable.

Engagingly so — and that can hardly be said for most histories. It sparkles with a wit and a breezy panache that takes it well beyond the mush of instant journalese or ponderous tomes that we so often encounter. In a world where style forms the substance, (after all, are not Indians great believers in *maya*?) Akbar's book will stand apart.

It is this love of form that marks the book's greatest weakness, and also its danger. For, well presented, seductive half-truths can then be presented as the entire truth. A half tale then becomes the only tale to be told. And for a generation, as Srikant Verma in another review of this book reminds us, 'that has little knowledge of the hurdles and pitfalls, the policies and the improvisations, the struggle and the endeavour that have gone to forge and preserve the unity of this country', Akbar's book can easily become a new bible — the easy and pleasurable way to discover the country.

Briefly stated, Akbar puts forward a simple thesis. What a country needs for being both democratic and secular is not only a belief in these ideals, but also a few great men who will see that these ideals become reality. So, if India has done well (to whatever extent it has), let us be thankful to Gandhi and Nehru and their commitments to these ideals, and, if Pakistan and Bangladesh have gone the way they have, it is due both to their mistaken notion that a common religion is sufficient basis for nationhood and the weakness and fickleness of their leaders. If India seems trapped in an impasse in Punjab the fault lies with the Sikh theocracy; and if we have never been able to sort out Kashmir it is because the Hindu advisers at the Centre just cannot comprehend that a Muslim majority border State is not interested in merging with Pakistan. For Akbar, it is the mullah, the sant, and the pundit who are the bane of the sub-continent.

'The only real danger that India still faces comes from the same theocratic forces which created Pakistan in 1947; the other dangers have been or are being resolved. In the 1940s the Muslim priests played the divisive game, with help from many quarters, since they knew their future was bleak in

a modern and secular society. In the 1980s the Sikh priesthood has intensified a similar battle. The Muslim mullah succeeded partly because the secular politician did not know how to confront him; the Sikh sant is hoping for the pattern to repeat itself' (p. 98).

Let us start with the Partition. Why? Because Akbar believes that, 'if we want to examine the possibilities that lie in the future, then it is vital to understand the partition of 1947.' For, in the rationale of that decision lies the ideology of the State, and in the truth or fraud of that ideology will lie the success or failure of a nation.

Is this true? Are we still bedevilled by the same forces that partitioned the country, killed over half a million of our citizens and forced many more to move from villages and cities that they had lived in for generations? Probably for those around Punjab and Bengal the memory is still sharp. For many more the Partition did not mean much. They were struggling then to eke out a bleak existence, and that is what they are doing now. Drawing international border lines is the past-time of rulers, and it matters little to people, except when they become the victims.

But what do we learn about the Partition and how it changed the fate of those who now live in Pakistan. The key figure is Jinnah, the Britain-turned agnostic, who made use of religion to fulfil his crazed dreams. Somewhere in between the love-life of this successful lawyer, we learn how the country was sold for a 'bowl of soup', because 'Pakistan was but the dream of a handful of theocrats', and the pernicious design of the British who accepted Jinnah as the sole spokesman for the country's millions of Muslims.

While one tends to agree with Akbar that the country need not have been partitioned, and that a common religion is no guarantee for a viable country, it does seem a little simplistic that had it not been for Jinnah, the mullahs, and the British — there would have been no partition. It does not speak well of a country if it permits itself to be dismembered just because a few mad men have mad ideas. But if it is true, then why does Akbar also write, elsewhere in the book, 'The nation will collapse only if its fundamental ideology, its democratic secular base is eroded — nothing else. The most brilliant dictator will not be able to keep India together. And the shoddiest democrat will find it difficult to break the country' (p. 40).

The fact is that India did break, and it is for us to choose between the two strains in Akbar's arguments. Notwithstanding what we might want to choose, Akbar has already done it for us. Thus, he has little to say about the historical and cultural memories of Hindus and Muslims in North India and Bengal; the rise of provincial communalism encouraged by the British and never seriously countered by any of the political parties; the blunderings of the Congress and its craven and witless surrender to Jinnah and the

British in its haste to occupy the Delhi *gaddi* and so on. (Iqbal Masud, 'Mullah Power,' *Sunday Observer*, Feb. 3).

The machinations of a few become important only when a much larger mass becomes a willing accomplice, and it is that which needs explanation. Why is it that Muslims and Hindus, who had for centuries learnt how to co-exist, participate in the collective mayhem of the Partition? One had hoped to find a few clues towards explaining that puzzle and, unfortunately, Akbar disappoints. His love for court intrigue only leads him into the identification of easy villains — the mullahs.

And once the subcontinent is partitioned, for Akbar, the fate of the two countries is sealed; at least that of Pakistan—a country which should never have been born. In one pithy paragraph, we learn all that Akbar has to say about Pakistan. 'Pakistan was conceived in the thirties, launched in the forties, distorted in the fifties, choked in the sixties, and decimated in the seventies. With yet another gun-and-moustache man at the helm in the eighties, the future looks as tenuous as the past.'

The history of Pakistan, from Jinnah to Zia, is predictable. In between the sharp sketches of the country and its leaders, the refrain is clear — an Islamic republic which, barring a brief interregnum has been governed by an oligarchy consisting of the military, the mullahs, the feudals, and the bureaucracy — can only lurch from crises to crises. What other course could history have taken for a country whose birth itself was illegitimate?

Not a word about the agricultural progress in Pakistan, or of its now developing industrial infrastructure. The fact that it has a much smaller proportion of its people living in abysmal poverty finds no mention. I sometimes wonder just how important the fact that the State is theocratic is to its citizens. Bangladesh too is an Islamic Republic, but their record of communal tension or disturbances is much better than ours.

This is not a defence of the regimes ruling our neighbours—much less of theocracies and military dictatorships. All I want to stress is that formal pronouncements of either secularism or democracy do not make India necessarily better in either of these two respects. Just look at the North-East or the tribal in Andhra? Or the way we treat those who dare to dissent or protest. Is our record of human and civil rights very much better?

It is the preoccupation with the theocracy as the major villain that mars the otherwise beautifully written chapters on Punjab. This section sees Akbar at his best, unravelling the tangled skien of Punjab history with masterly ease. The histories of both Sikhism and of Punjab, and how they intertwine, are clearly and lucidly brought out.

Where Akbar misses the cue is in coming to terms with either the Bhindranwale phenomenon, or the

contribution of the Centre in making Punjab what it is today—the central problem facing the Indian State.

Why does a man like Bhindranwale, unheard of a few years back, become the force that he did? Why does he assume a greater force after his death? Was it only because of the weakness of the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Party leadership in containing this religious zealot? Or is it that the Centre, instead of vacillating, should have acted sooner?

Punjab today represents both a secular and a religious problem. If on the one hand, we have the assertion of a regional party whose ambitions of ruling the State are being thwarted by an unaccommodating Centre, there is also the problem of a spatially concentrated religious minority coming to terms with the twin pressures of modernisation and of a scare (real or imaginary) of being absorbed into the Hindu mainstream.

Chandigarh, the sharing of river waters, the issues related to agricultural prices and taxation, the grouse against having to share a larger proportion of the State tax revenue with the Centre, the lack of large industry in the State—all vexing and secular problems of the Punjabi people—represent only one part of the story. The other relates to the real fear of the Sikh identity, as we know it, disappearing.

Akbar's tilt against religion blinds him to the fact that for the vast majorities of our people religion does form a vital part of their identity. This would probably be truer for a minority as easily distinguishable as the Sikhs. If they are proud of being Sikhs, then is it not natural for them to be upset with the games played with them when the linguistic boundaries of the State were being drawn? Would they not feel aggrieved when the Hindus of Punjab give Hindi rather than Punjabi as their mother tongue? And when these external threats get combined with the 'decay from within' that comes with speedy modernisation, the Sikhs would certainly feel besieged. Is it surprising that Bhindranwale could so easily raise the slogan of 'Sikhism in danger'?

It is not only the Sikhs or their religious-temporal leadership that has succeeded in communalising Punjab. The constant efforts of the Congress to thwart the 'political ambitions of a community' is equally responsible. Much more than Punjab, what the ruling party at the Centre has been able to do, more successfully than the RSS or the BJP, is the communalisation of the Hindus. Akbar constantly minimises, or does not see, the real danger of a Hindu backlash—a direct product, I am afraid, of our secularism. How else do we explain why a majority community starts perceiving itself as a beleaguered minority? It is the 'ethnicisation of the Hindus'—seen in the sudden increase in the Bhagwati Jagarans or the numerous public poojas—that today poses the real danger of the Hindus seeing themselves as one. We only have to see the

smug and satisfied expressions of the Hindus when discussing the anti-Sikh riots to realise how close we are to fanaticism.

Nowhere, in the otherwise brilliant chapters on Punjab, does Akbar discuss how this came about, how two communities with centuries of close ties now see each other as enemies. Punjab, more than the hundreds of Hindu-Muslim riots that our country has seen, demolishes the myth of India's secular State. The country, I still believe, is secular, but no longer do I have faith in the secular protestations of either our rulers, or the Constitution.

The chapters on Kashmir make pallid reading after the heady sections on Punjab. Since many of us are fairly ill-informed about the State and its history, at least my expectations were high. But Akbar, in his usual style, converts the history of Kashmir into one of the relationship between two families — the Nehrus and the Abdullahs. Undoubtedly, both were great men, also fairly central to the understanding of the relationship between Kashmir and the Indian Union. But are there no other factors and forces that go into the making of the present day Kashmir?

Why are the Kashmiri Muslims so distrusted by the Centre? Akbar mentions but does not really develop this theme. Why have the rulers in Delhi never believed, and this belief is shared by a large number of Indians, that the Kashmiris are by choice a part of India? Is it an instinctive distrust of a Muslim majority State? Is it because from the time of Nehru, the only way the Congress could legitimise its imprisonment of the Sheikh was by raising the threat of secession? Did the Sheikh, with his continuing demand for a plebiscite, contribute to this feeling? None of this unfortunately becomes very clear and Akbar should have followed up on all the leads that are scattered in his book.

Elsewhere she writes, 'The trouble with history is not the fact but the memory', and it is this memory that legitimises the Centre's attempts at thwarting popular rule in Kashmir. Why else is it that the dismissal of the NTR government in Andhra Pradesh arouses such an outburst, when a similar dismissal of Farooq Abdullah causes hardly a murmur in the rest of the country.

The graver problem in Kashmir is that all its rulers — from the erstwhile Dogra kings to the present G.M. Shah — have never really helped develop viable democratic institutions. The State and its people have always been kept 'under developed' and the administration has been treated as the plaything of a few politicians. Instead of concentrating on developing the State and its people, what we have are the petty struggles of feudal chieftans over who would control the fiefdom. Kashmir, as Iqbal Masud writes, may be strategically important, but is politically boring — particularly when all we have from Akbar are effusive lobs about 'The Lion' and his son.

My real consternation with the book, to return to my first theme, is as much with what Akbar has written, as with what he has not. If Akbar is off-mark in having presented the complex histories of the Partition, Punjab and Kashmir as the drawing room battles of 'heros and villains'; of neglecting the perceptions and feelings of the unrecorded millions except as 'objects to be played around by rulers'; of thinking that communalism can be countered by a mixture of constitutional pronouncements and stiff action against the formal theocracies; he is even more mistaken in assessing that the beginning and the end of the dangers to India's secular and democratic State comes from the handling or mis-handling of the Muslim and the Sikh questions. A book called '*The Seige Within*' should have had a wider context.

Akbar has little to say about the steady decay of all our institutions; of our political parties reducing themselves to plebiscitary vote gathering machines; of the corruption, criminalisation and now communalisation of our politics; of our development process refusing to recognise, much less do anything, about the steadily increasing impoverished millions; of the steady replacement of civil authority in parts of the country by armed rule; of the privatization and the insulation of the State from the common citizenry.

In a situation where the labouring poor, the vast majority of our citizenry, can exercise choices about neither their ways of living nor dying, constitutional protestations about secularism and democracy mean little. This is a time not for reason but for hope.

Akbar ends with a lovely quote from a Persian poet — 'What you and I hear are different:

You here the sound of closing doors

But I of doors that open.'

How True!

Harsh Sethi

WHO ARE THE GUILTY? Published by the
People's Union for Civil Liberties and the People's
Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi 1984.

**DELHI 31 OCTOBER to 4 NOVEMBER: Report
of the Citizens' Commission.** Published by the
Citizens Commission under the Chairmanship of
S.M. Sikri, Retired Chief Justice of India, Delhi
1985.

TRUTH ABOUT DELHI VIOLENCE by Amiya
Rao, Aurobindo Ghose and N.D. Pancholi.
Published by the Citizens for Democracy, Delhi
1985.

It is a sad commentary on our times that recognised institutions of the State are gradually forfeiting their

If change is what our vote was about, the change should be for the better.

Do we know what needs to be changed, and into what?

Will the change bring us closer to the values we have always cherished? The values willed to us by Gandhiji, who staked his life to root the communal virus out of our people? Who left no material possessions behind.

By Jawaharlal Nehru, who after seventeen years as Prime Minister had only the royalties on his books to his name.

By Lal Bahadur Shastri whose assets after eighteen years of ministerial office were a few unpaid bills.

Change should mean a rediscovery of this lost heritage — a heritage of public ethic equal to any.

Where has this proud heritage gone? Whichever way you turn you see the face of corruption which is fast changing into criminality.

A criminality which showed its ugly face in the politically inspired mobs which held the capital of this country to ransom in the opening days of November.

A criminality which allows the killers of innocent men, and children to go unpunished. Which elevates the guilty to public office. Which sets two standards of justice in our secular state: one for the killers of one community, the other for those killed because they are of a different community.

This must change if we want to rediscover our lost heritage of propriety in public office. If we want to take our country forward.

The first step is to free ourselves from fear, fear to speak our mind.

A VOTE FOR CHANGE

To watch every action of those we have voted into power.

To protest every infringement of the law.

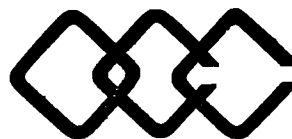
To demand punishment of the guilty, whatever their status.

To point to the misuse of public office at every step, whether in the cynical or vulgar use of power, or in the indifference to public accountability, or in the monopoly of the media.

We must learn to recognise the victimised, the threatened, the discriminated, and by our actions remind them that they are not alone. That all those concerned with the country's future are with them in their search for a just and human society.

That is the beginning of our movement — a movement which seeks to restore to the nation the rule of law and the secular tradition.

That is the meaning of change.



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role as conscience-keepers of the nation. Nothing reflects this sorry situation more than the manner in which the government and even opposition parties have washed their hands off the tragedy of the post-assassination violence. However, at least in Delhi, three citizens' groups and organisations stepped into the void left by the politicians, policemen and bureaucrats. The Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights, the Citizens' Commission headed by S.M. Sikri (retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court) and the Citizens for Democracy, took it upon themselves to perform a function which the government chose to abjure. They were impelled to conduct their own investigations into the violence when it became obvious that the authorities were not interested in holding a judicial enquiry to find out how/why the riots broke out, why the killings were not controlled in time and who was guilty for organising them.

Even the opposition parties, for electoral calculations of their own, did not do much to condemn the anti-Sikh violence or press for more effective relief and rehabilitation measures. Had it not been for the efforts of the three public-spirited bodies above, the alienation of the Sikh community would have almost reached a point of no return.

Between them, in their reports to the nation, the three organisations have clearly established that the unprecedented anti-Sikh violence was not a spontaneous reaction to the late Prime Minister's assassination, but instigated and organised by elements in the Cong-I and bureaucracy.

The Sikri panel came to the conclusion that, 'A progressively deteriorating political situation in the Punjab, over the previous three years or so, became the prelude for the worst carnage across the country since Partition. The brutal killing of Smt. Indira Gandhi sparked off these atrocities. The remarkable uniformity in the pattern of the crimes committed, with some local variations, strongly suggest that at some stage the objective became to "Teach the Sikhs a lesson". The incredible and abysmal failure of the administration and the police; the instigation by dubious political elements; the equivocal role of the information media; and the inertia, apathy and indifference of the official machinery; all lead to the inferences that follow.'

The inferences drawn by the Commission amounted to dereliction of duty on the part of the administration and police. The panel also projected the alleged involvement of various elements of the ruling party in the violence and was disturbed by the 'apathy and ambivalence' of other political parties. The panel received no information that any of the political parties played 'any significant role in providing either protection or shelter, relief or succour, in any of the affected localities.' 'It is a sad commentary on the political life of the capital' notes the panel, 'that at the moment of its dire need, political

activists should be accused of either active instigation or inexcusable apathy.'

In his foreword to the report of the Citizens For Democracy, *Truth About Delhi Violence*, V.M. Tarkunde draws two lessons from the experience of the Delhi riots; the extent of criminalization of Indian politics and the utter unreliability of the police force in a critical situation. He states, 'Although the passing away of Mrs. Gandhi became known by about 10.30 a.m. on that day, it was on 1st November and the two succeeding days that a massacre of hundreds of Sikhs and the burning and looting of their shops and houses took place. The rioting was organised by a number of unscrupulous politicians who are habitually associated with anti-social elements and downright criminals. That is the reason why looting was so extensive and why the killing of Sikhs was attended with unparalleled brutality. Scores of Sikhs in Delhi were literally burnt alive. It is for the top leaders of the ruling party to consider the ways and means by which the process of criminalisation of politics within its ranks can be reversed.'

'Complaints of police partiality were voiced after all the communal riots which took place in recent years. In the case of Delhi riots, however, the extent of police partiality exceeded all limits. Instead of trying to protect innocent victims, the police, except in a solitary instance, were either utterly indifferent or positively hostile to the Sikhs. The experience of the Delhi riots justifies the view that the law enforcement agency in the country has itself become, to a considerable extent, a lawless force. It is essential that the government should devise and carry out a long-range plan to convert the police force into a law-abiding and law-enforcing agency.'

The heinous offences which took place during the Delhi riots, including looting, arson and murder, were all perpetrated in broad daylight. Particulars of some of the offenders are well known, and the names of many others can be found if a proper investigation is carried out. There is, however, noticeable apathy in doing this work. Although over two and a half months have lapsed after the riot, not a single case against any offender appears to have been filed before any Delhi magistrate. The Delhi Administration will be justly blamed if these heinous offences go unpunished.

The authors of the report were able to marshal conclusive evidence to show that the violence was not communal in character, but 'sponsored by Congress-I members.'

'In retrospect', states the report, 'it is perhaps not implausible to suggest that between the time of Mrs. Gandhi's assassination on the morning of October '31 and the time of her son Rajiv Gandhi's accession as the new Prime Minister in the evening of that fateful day, crucial decisions were taken by someone somewhere in logical sequence (however

perverse the logic may appear in a secular, socialist democratic republic):

1. Rajiv Gandhi must succeed as the new Prime Minister;
2. Elections must be held forthwith to cash in on the 'sympathy' factor in favour of Congress-I;
3. Sikhs as a community must be taught a lesson and demonstratively so; this was felt necessary to consolidate the Hindu public opinion swaying towards Indira Gandhi and her party after the army action on the Golden Temple in June. The situation changed dramatically after the assassination. The Hindu community's confidence in the ability of the ruling party to give protection to the Hindus against the 'militant' Sikhs would have been shattered, the Hindu votes would have swung towards the Opposition, if nothing whatsoever was done to suggest immediate "retribution" and "badla" for her assassination.

'So something appears to have been done'.

The CFD report amounts to a strong well informed condemnation of the political process. Moreover, the PUCL-PUDR report; *Who Are The Guilty* actually goes a step further by naming the politicians, policemen and others, who by their acts of commission and omission were responsible for the November massacres in Delhi. The three organisations have done what the government should have done. They have investigated the causes of the disturbances and identified the guilty. And still the government refuses to take punitive action against the guilty.

Given such an ostrich-like attitude, it will be wholly unrealistic to expect Sikhs to feel safe and secure in their own homeland, India.

Baljit Malik

POPULISM: Its Past, Present and Future by V. Khoros. Progress Publishers, Moscow, (English Translation 1984).

HOW the 'other half' thinks, feels and conceptualises is becoming an increasingly rare and therefore critical input in a rapidly polarized world. The divide is nowhere greater than in the realm of political analysis. The present work presents 'one world's' view of a relevant social phenomena. The author, who is a senior fellow at the Soviet Academy of Sciences, attempts an analysis of populism — a subject that has been both misunderstood and hard to define.

In a *tour-de-force* that encompasses politics, sociology and history, the author pursues the concept in its basic senses and details several strands of philosophical thought which have gone towards the formulation of populism as understood by the author in particular, and in the U.S.S.R. in general.

The result is a work that is very clearly aimed at the academic community. It is strewn with references and foot-notes that provide indications of the author's detailed research work. In his attempt to ensure that the definitions he works with are, in some senses at least, universally applicable, the author does not confine himself to Russian scholarship or the conventional Marxian theorists. Instead, he uses and quotes a wide variety of western sources as the basic anchor for his thesis.

Just as 'it is practically impossible for an ideology to perfectly suit reality', it is rare that any single definition can describe any one ideology. And populism, hydra-headed phenomenon that it now is, is even more so. The most workable definition of populism and one that is easily understood in several contexts is, however, not accepted unquestioningly by Khoros. But, he comes closest to this: 'Populist movements are movements aimed at power for the benefit of the people as a whole which result from the reaction of those, usually intellectuals, alienated from the existing power structure, to the stresses of rapid economic, social, cultural or political change. These movements are characterized by a belief in a return to, or adaptation of, more simple and traditional forms and values emanating from the people, particularly the more archaic sections of the people who are taken to be the repository of virtue.'

Khoros analyses the historical and economic paths that populist movements the world over have been following. Despite evolving independently in various parts of the globe, the author is able to distil the features that make for commonality verging on, as it were, a universality that is still not widely recognized as an aspect of populism.

The characteristics of modern populism are among the more interesting derivatives of Khoros' study. Revealing a remarkable consciousness of the contemporary — increasingly rare in works that are not palpably journalistic — Khoros suggests that 'modern populism (has a) nationalistic character.' This, says the author, explains why the movement can take on forms which are very popular in today's world, like 'Buddhist socialism, Islamic socialism' etc.

Another common feature the author notes is the related search for national authenticity that verges on confrontationism — with Euro centrism sometimes or anti urban anonymity elsewhere. Almost paradoxically, there is the additional feature of 'Seeking to assimilate the achievements of modern science.'

It is obvious that the elusive definition of populism that the author seeks to work towards is one that can deal effectively both with movements in Russia during the 19th century and yet has a relevance to contemporary politics, in parts of Asia, where populism is old, in Africa with the largest number of

populist leaders and in Latin America — with its activist populists. What the author does not intend to include are strands of 'populism' that are prevalent in the more advanced countries. Though such movements are acknowledged to exist they are swiftly dismissed as representing merely a fringe phenomenon. There is however a discussion of historical populist movements in the U.S.A. coming down to the present. The indictment of half hearted populism that verges on demagoguery is expectably severe. Equally swift is the dismissal of Chinese populism as a derivative of Sun Yat-senism. There is little mention though of later day developments in that country.

Of particular interest to Indian readers is the analysis of Gandhism as a major populist ideological trend in Asia. Khoros' description of the peasant disturbance in Bihar during the 70's and the events thereafter is revealing. A kind of fraud populism is suggested as the reason for the Janata Party's 1980 defeat.

The historical interpretation of Gandhi's thoughts and those of associates like Vinoba Bhave (his name consistently mis-spelt as Bhave) and Jai Prakash Narayan is particularly interesting. They reflect one kind of Russian academic interpretation of subjects like Sarvodaya, decentralisation and 'dharma'. Says Khoros 'there is gap between the declarations of loyalty to Gandhi's heritage and the possibility of translating them into concrete policies. This is the problem of workability of Gandhi's doctrine, the degree and form in which some of its principles can be realised, as well as with the prospects for the emergence of such a socio-political situation which will favour the activity of forces capable of promoting interest of the masses and working in contact with them. The answer of this question is the matter of the future.' It is a conflict that several other developing countries are also in the throes of resolving.

The book is replete with thumbnail discussions about individual countries. These will no doubt provide a useful basis for further work and material for scholars who wish to go into greater detail. For most readers, however, the greatest use the book can be put to is as a handy compendium of Soviet academic work and thought on a subject that is increasingly relevant to our times.

Populism is no paper tiger today. This ideology, say Khoros, has not 'simply been turbulent, generating theories and programmes, but (has) also sought to translate them into life.' It holds hope for the future, too, says the author who sees it as being capable of inducing 'democratic capitalism' and also providing an 'ideological basis for a non capitalist development strategy'. And, as a study of an ideology that promises so much, Khoros' contribution is an essential input for contemporary social theorists.

THE NEHRUS AND THE GANDHIS: An Indian Dynasty by Tariq Ali. London, Picador (Pan Books in association with Chatto and Windus), 1985.

POTTED histories are disconcerting at the best of times, but when they race along at such break-neck speed as this one, they leave one gasping for breath. Tariq Ali certainly displays an extraordinary flair for stringing together a wide variety of facts—glimpses of Jawaharlal with father, with mother, with daughter, with wife, falling in love with Edwina almost at sight, interspersed with the national scene and the wider international arena.

It is in the nature of such a hurried and omnibus attempt that it would disappoint in providing interesting insights to the characters Tariq Ali accompanies through the three hundred odd pages of the book. After all, the Nehrus and Gandhis have been written about almost to saturation point, they have talked about themselves, their speeches are recorded on endless tapes, every action of theirs has been national property in a way. So, inevitably, such a chronological quickie can never hope to be anything more than simplistic.

People are fitted into slots. Gandhiji represents the conservative right, Nehru is the perpetual revolutionary. How and where then did they meet? For meet they surely did—and that in itself might have provided a key to the better understanding of India, of why the communists here have been unable to mobilise the people over four decades despite their painful contortions of policy. It is perhaps worth considering that Nehru without Gandhi might have suffered the same fate as them. Was Gandhi closer to the Indian reality? A discussion of such fundamental issues, particularly coming from a young revolutionary like Tariq Ali, might have been of considerable value.

Nearer home in time, through the days of Indira Gandhi's Prime Ministership, there seems to be a total absence of frame. The battle between her and the Syndicate is again in bald left and right terms, ignoring the fierce struggle for personal power, or the support she received for preserving 'Nehruism' or what was left of it in his last years.

One can cite endless examples of this nature for Tariq Ali has certainly tried to weave together many diverse strands, too many in fact, sometimes inconsequential like Phoolan Devi's profile, but they don't always mesh and the final product doesn't satisfy. Salman Rushdie's introduction is very thoughtful and the book does have its use as a ready reference for the succession of events through a particular time frame in India's history. But anyone looking for a deeper analysis, of the why's and wherefore's beneath the surface, will be sorely disappointed.

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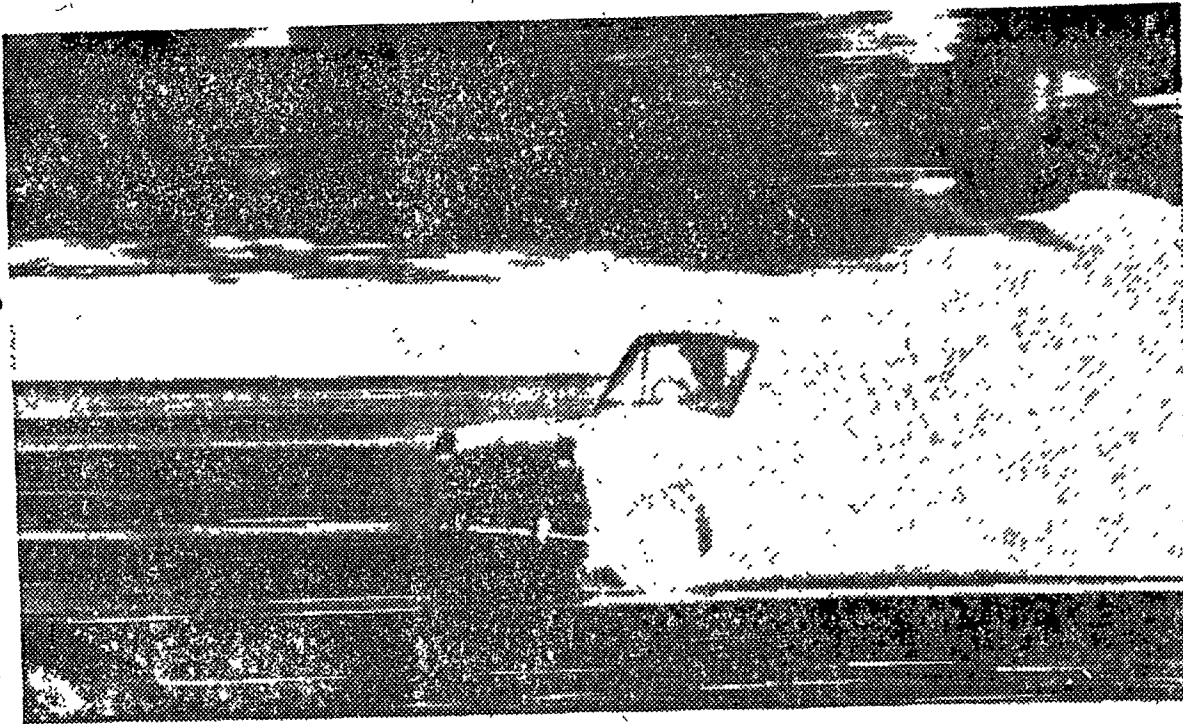
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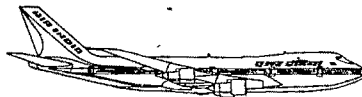
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CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH



DR. CHARAT RAM

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HIGHLIGHTS

- A year of record profit.
- Higher dividend; prospects of further improvement.
- Notable progress by the Company's diesel injection unit.
- New project for manufacture of Engine Valves.
- Need of the hour: political/social harmony; improving capital - output ratio nationally; "making investments pay"; most modern international technology for agriculture; cost control nationally.

Friends,

I am happy to welcome you to the Company's forty-eighth annual general meeting.

The directors' report, and the accounts for the year are already with you, and you would have noted that the Company made a record profit ever, last year. The gross profit was over rupees 3 crore against 1.26 crore in the preceding year and about 2.5 crore in the best year before that. The directors have, therefore, proposed to raise the equity dividend from 10 to 15%. It is expected that we may be able to sustain this level of dividend in the years to come, and maybe better it.

Before proceeding to make observations on our operations of the year, I would like to refer to some significant events of the last few months.

The brutal assassination of the late Prime Minister, Shrimati Indira Gandhi, in October last year, was a great national tragedy. Such a catastrophe could have thrown any country into chaos, the test was all the more severe for our country, which is not only the largest democracy in the world but also comprises some highly individualistic components. It is a sign of the maturity of the Indian people, and testimony to our democratic tradition, that we were able to ride the crisis with total calm and equanimity.

The smooth transition of Government to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi has earned international acclaim. The credit for this must go, in no small measure, to Shri Rajiv Gandhi, whose hallmarks of sincerity and forthrightness have earned him the confidence of all Indians regardless of caste or creed or political affiliations.

In the parliamentary elections held a few months ago, Shri Rajiv

Gandhi led the Congress party to a historic victory. In spite of having a massive majority in the Parliament, he has followed a policy of harmony and national consensus. The results of the recent elections to the State Assemblies present a picture of stability, blended with democratic diversity. All this augurs well for the political future of our country.

The country is undoubtedly faced with enormous problems, but there is an unprecedented sense of confidence in all social groups of our country — the Government, the business, the labour, the intelligentsia and the people at large. This is vindicated by the proposals presented to the Parliament a few days ago, which show a bold and imaginative approach to all issues of economic development and place a premium on efficiency of management of national enterprises.

I would like to assure Shri Rajiv Gandhi that we, at The SHRIRAM GROUP, would indeed give our best hand to him in the task of achievement of our national, social and economic goals.

Since Jay Engineering is an integral part of the national milieu, I would like to make some observations on a few significant aspects of the national business and social situation.

1 Political and social harmony is vital for the economic progress of any country. The economic progress of Japan is an outstanding model for us. In our country, there have been, unfortunately, symptoms of declining political and social harmony in many spheres. It is critical, for the achievement of the desired momentum of economic activity as well as for

ensuring an improved living standard for the people, that the trends of disharmony be arrested and high levels of harmony be developed in political and social spheres. This, in my view, is the foremost task requiring the joint efforts of the Government and the people alike.

2 The country would soon be launching its 7th Five Year Plan with a total expenditure of about 3,20,000 crore rupees, this is double of the expenditure of the 6th Plan, and by any reckoning, it is a very ambitious target. For its effective implementation it will require close monitoring and fine-tuning all along the way.

Such a vast expenditure has built-in seeds of massive inflation. This phenomenon is more pronounced if output does not grow commensurately with outlay. Regrettably, our capital-output ratio has been worsening progressively, from 3.1 in 1950, the ratio has gone up to 6.1 today. The position now is that it takes twice as much to produce a given level of output than it did at the time of our independence.

We have, therefore, to concentrate on output, more than on outlays, if we want to have growth levels of countries like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, and at the same time keep prices in check.

3 Some of the factors responsible for high capital-output ratio are, inordinate delays in project approvals, and effectuation of projects and, continuing low capacity utilisation in critical industries. It is imperative that our economic system should provide inbuilt incentives for efficient project management, and optimum capacity utilisation, and penalties for failure, more



SHRIRAM

particularly in key areas like power generation and other capital intensive projects

- 4 The immediate area of attention for the Government is to be for achieving an accelerated rate of economic growth for the country. The annual rate of growth of GNP in the last 35 years has been 3.5%. This is inadequate for India by any standard. Neutralised by over 2% growth in population, the per capita increase in national income is practically negligible. It is my belief that a stable national income growth rate of 10% per year is achievable within our existing resources of men, materials and money. We have to learn from countries like Japan, South Korea, Taiwan etc which have all registered growth rates of over 10% for decades, by making their investments pay. I repeat — "By Making Their Investments Pay". This is the key to sustained growth, in a country's economy no less than in corporate enterprises.

- 5 It is a happy augury that our food production has been going up for some time now. However, the effect of record food production last year must be somewhat clouded by the fact that per capita availability of food actually went down. Clearly, we must avoid being pleased with selective statistics. What is called for, besides of course population control measures, is vastly improved farm management and introduction of most modern international technology in agriculture, so that we can look forward not only to achieving self-sufficiency in agricultural production, but also to becoming a major exporter of foodgrains and other agricultural produce like the United States. We indeed can achieve this with but little financial inputs.
- 6 Wholesale and consumer prices is another area of dichotomy between statistics and reality. While the public statistics on price situation appear soothing, the actual cost of production of all categories of goods, and household budgets of citizens are escalating at steep rates. Not

only does it affect the quality of life of the people, but it also makes export of Indian goods more difficult, and cramps domestic consumption. Our economy is clearly becoming a high cost economy and this trend must be reversed.

I would now like to present to you briefly a resumé of our last year's operations.

FANS

Consumer sale of 'USHA' fans was the highest ever in the history of the company, and the Company maintained its leadership in the market. While competition in fan business has been getting sharper, USHA was able to maintain its market leadership through continuing emphasis on modern techniques in production and marketing both.

Our Hyderabad and Agra operations showed substantial gains, the Calcutta unit continued to require an out-of-proportion management input.

SEWING MACHINES

Operations of the Sewing Machine Works at Calcutta showed some improvement. This unit, however, suffers from the basic malaise of being heavily overstaffed, and worker productivity being incorrigibly low. Management efforts continue to be made to improve the situation, but unfortunately the required response needed from the workforce for turning the tide is not available due to union pressures.

SHRIRAM DIESELS

Shriram Diesels Unit at Hyderabad, producing diesel fuel injection equipment, made notable progress. The unit achieved the highest production and sale since its commencement in 1979. Your directors have sanctioned substantial investment for expanding the production capacities of this unit, and further expansion plans are on the drawing board.

NEW PROJECTS

We have received a letter of intent and approval of technical collaboration for the manufacture of

Engine Valves, which is a critical component of all automobile engines, including cars, commercial vehicles, etc. Fuji Valves Company of Japan, which is the largest manufacturer of engine valves in Japan, will provide technical know-how for this project.

GENERAL

You would notice from the balance sheet that lands and buildings of the Company have been revalued, adding about 17 crore rupees to reserves. This will augment our capital base and facilitate raising of funds for our expanding business and for new projects. Proposals for issuing debentures etc. will be placed before you at an appropriate time.

Friends, Jay Engineering is the engineering flagship of the House of Shriram and it holds a pre-eminent position in industry with the nationally and internationally popular 'USHA' and 'SHRIRAM' brands which is quite independent of its relative size and product range. We have succeeded in maintaining a lead in our conventional industries, and are forging ahead in new, high-tech ones. The emerging national scenario offers challenges for those prepared to meet them, and a threat for the laggards. We started out as pioneers and are gearing ourselves so that we shall be counted as pioneers in the new milieu as well.

In closing, I must convey our thanks to the financial institutions, our bankers, business associates, directors, shareholders and all our personnel, from whom we have received complete support.

Statement made by Dr. Charat Ram, Chairman, The Jay Engineering Works Ltd., at the forty-eighth annual general meeting at New Delhi, on March 21, 1985.

Note:
This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the annual general meeting.

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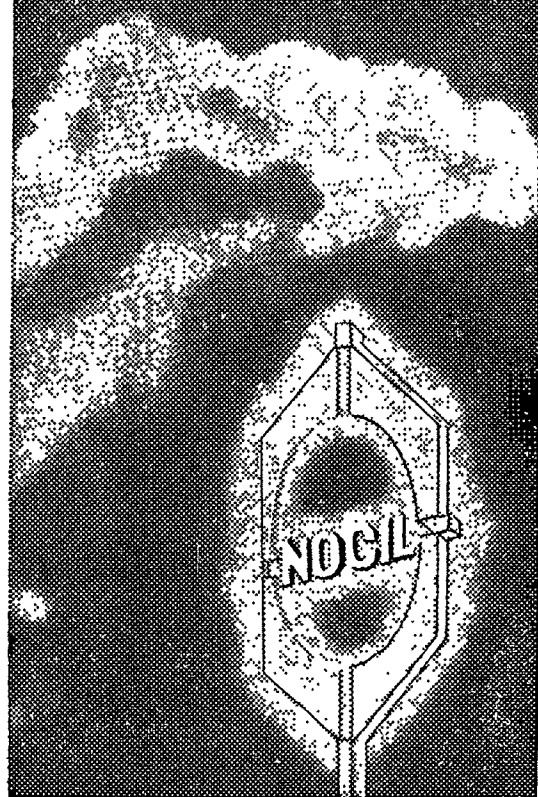
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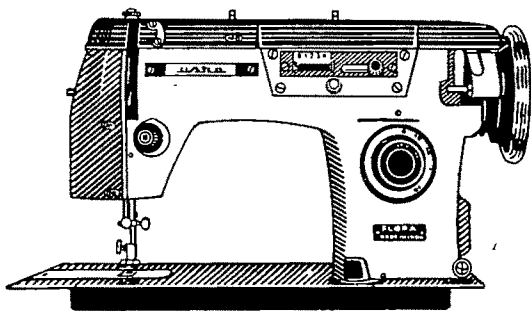
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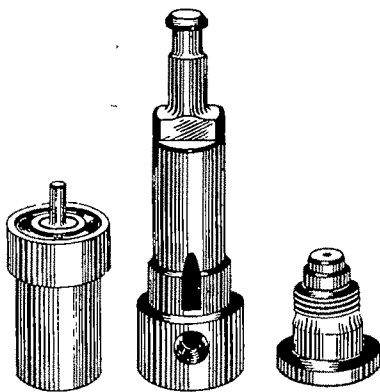
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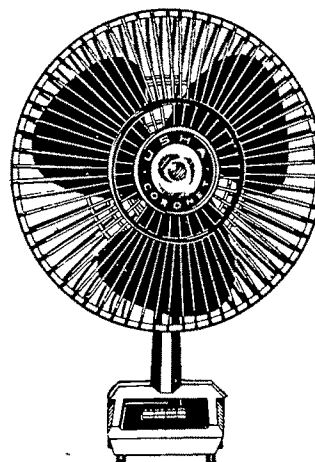
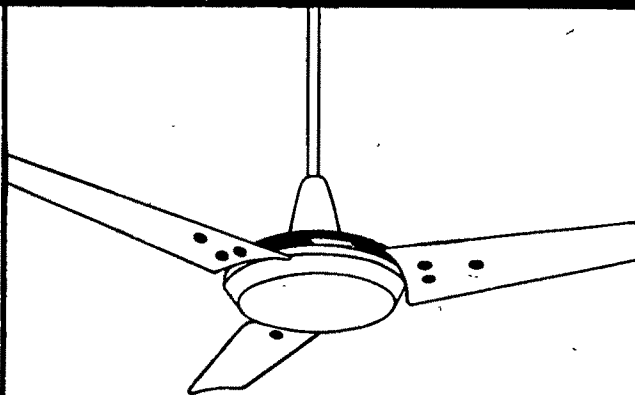
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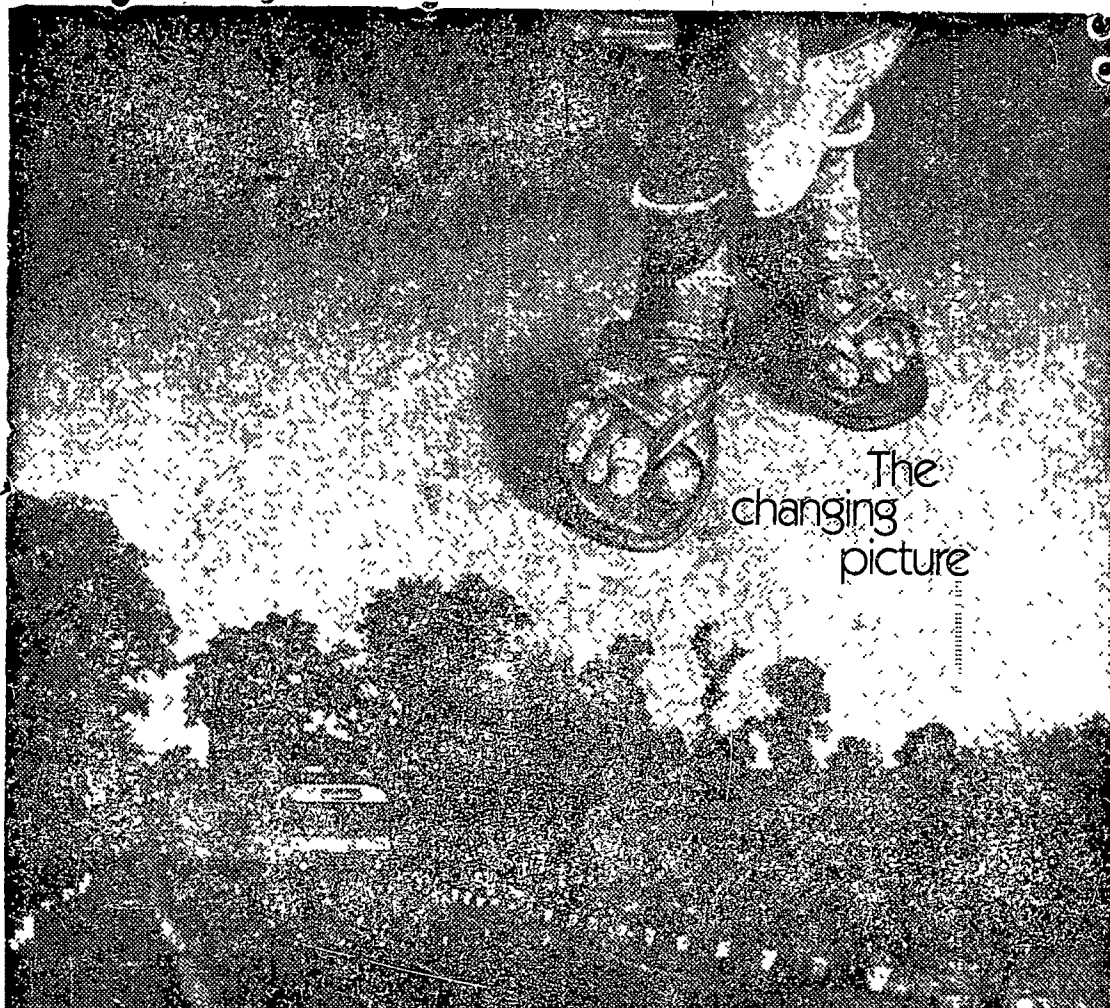
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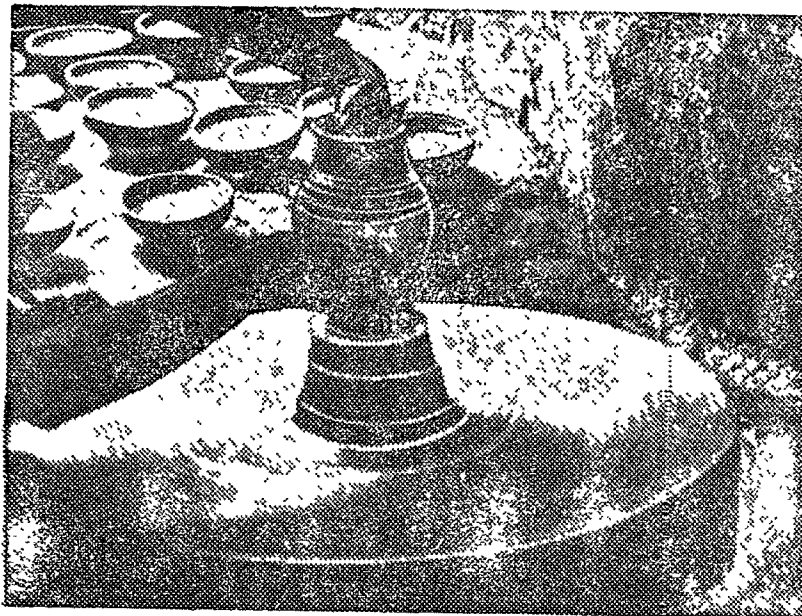
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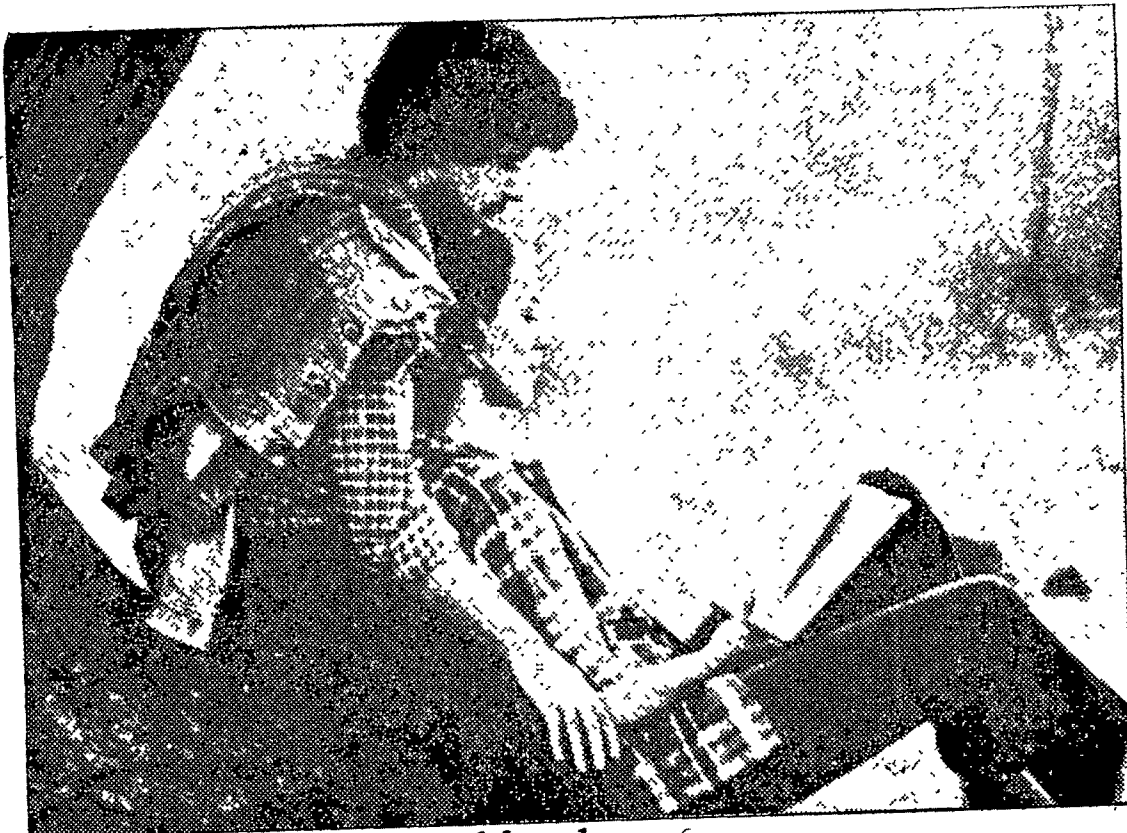
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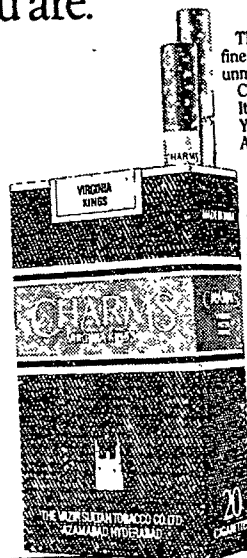


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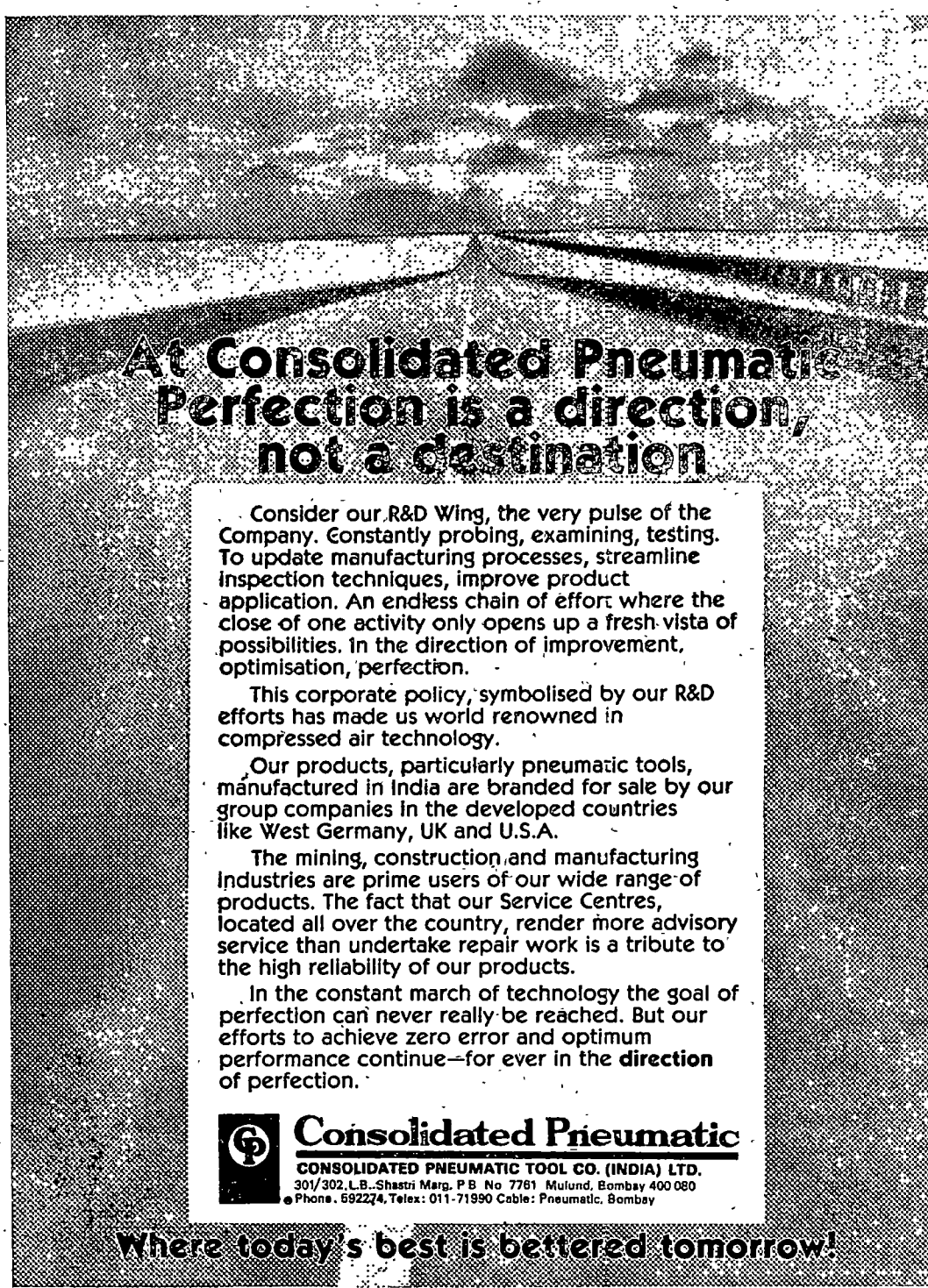
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Lt. Gen. M.L. Thapan, former Vice Chief of Army Staff

THE FACES OF TERRORISM

Lt. Gen. E.A. Vas, former Vice Chief of Army Staff

THE ULTIMATE WEAPON

Lt. Gen. S.K. Sinha, former Vice Chief of Army Staff

THE SECURITY MIX-UP

Jaswant Singh, Member of Parliament, Bharatiya Janata Party

LOYALTY, DISCIPLINE, TREACHERY

Romesh Thapar, Editor, 'Seminar'

BOOKS

Reviewed by R.N. Duggal and Shahnaz Anklesaria

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography compiled by M.P. Nayar

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury of Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

WHEN a State becomes lazy and confused about the specific uses of its power levers, and is unable properly to distinguish police functions from army responsibilities or pushes military units to support messy police operations, the time has arrived to assert some rather obvious truths. Admittedly, the Punjab situation, badly manipulated and damaged by short-sighted political management, is not the best test about army usage, but we must remember that we have been guilty of confusing the role of the army ever since we used it as an instrument to 'tame' the north-eastern border regions. Since then, the military has been used at every level— yes, even as a transport system for the election tours of prime ministers! —until it has become the custom to 'summon' soldiers to perform unpopular tasks because formations designed for such duties had

been made incompetent, were corrupted and impotent. This situation, now prevailing on a continental scale, threatens to expose the military—and particularly the army—to a variety of disruptive influences. As a result the 'image' of the military as a force dedicated to the protection of national security could also be diffused and made controversial. This issue of SEMINAR is an attempt to bring the debate back into focus. Some articles were written after the 'Bluestar' operation against the already desecrated and fortified Golden Temple in Amritsar. Others, following the assassination of Indira Gandhi, and its almost genocidal aftermath which has yet to be officially investigated. Clearly, we have to move to a more precise understanding of our various levers of power.

A case study

NANDITA HAKSAR

'The people of Nagaland are shocked to hear about the tragedy of the people of Punjab. A place of worship is the most treasured for the Naga people. When the Indian Government sent its armed forces to the Golden Temple premises which resulted in a terrible bloodshed in the place where the Sikh people used to worship, it must have provoked the religious sentiments of all the Sikh people. The Naga people know best how much it hurts when the place we use for worshipping our God is not respected, for the Naga people have experienced the tragedy when the Indian Government sent its forces to commit genocide inside the

churches in Nagaland like raping in the pulpit from where people are told of the love of God and the word of God is conveyed to His people. It was also inside the churches that the Naga people were interrogated and were tortured. Today, it is not only the churches in Nagaland but now a war is taking place between the Indian armed forces and the Sikh patriots in a holy place of the Sikh people...'

THIS is the exact wording from an editorial dated June 19, 1984 of the *Oking Times*, a small paper brought out from Kohima, Nagaland. It is an expression of the anguish born

out of bitter experience of a people living under Indian army rule. For more than 30 years, various parts of the North East have been put under virtual martial law and throughout the period the ordinary citizens have suffered indescribable horror — from brutal physical torture, rape and even bombing of entire villages to humiliation and indignity in their daily lives.

In the name of hunting out insurgents, the armed forces have raped women, burnt alive pastors, tortured villagers with electric shocks in their private parts and looted the villages. Murder, sodomy, beating, and looting have been justified in the name of the Indian nation by the Indian Government. Anyone who has dared to question this has been dubbed anti-national.

The government has created complex political problems by its economic policies which have led to greater inequalities; its social and cultural policies which have aroused communal passions and by its unashamed political opportunism at the cost of the nation and its people. When the people have protested, the government has sought to block all channels of democratic dissent. When people have had the courage to organize and challenge this injustice, the government has tried to put down their spirit of revolt by brute military force. And like every other government who has tried to solve a political problem by military force, the Indian Government too has failed. It has only succeeded in alienating more and more people from itself and its armed forces — whether it's in Nagaland, Mizoram or in Punjab.

In response to the continuous presence of the army and the violation of democratic rights and the breakdown of the civil administration, there have sprung up various democratic rights organizations in the North East committed to exposing the brutalities being committed on their people. These organizations have, at considerable personal risk to their activists, succeeded for the first time in exposing the myth of the heroic Indian army patrolling our borders and safeguarding our national interests.

It was through the efforts of such organizations as the Manipur Human Rights Forum, the Naga People's Movement for Human Rights (NPMHR) and local newspapers like *Resistance* or *Oking Times*, to name a few, that the role and impact of the armed forces got focussed. The efforts which started in the late 1970s began to bear fruit in the eighties. The media also responded and for the first time there were reports and features on the unspeakable tortures inflicted on the common people of that area.

In the eighties, the Gauhati High Court began to be flooded with petitions challenging various aspects of army rule. These petitions were filed mainly by women whose husbands were picked up by the army and never returned. This was the first time such writs were admitted, and arguments heard. However, the petitions did not yield concrete relief.

In October 1982 a fact finding team of six women went to the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur to study first hand the tortures perpetrated by the armed forces in the name of hunting Naga hostiles. They went there on the invitation of the East District Women's Association. However, two of the women did not sign the report. And the reason they gave was that it was not right to criticize the army. Significantly, the two of them were close to the ruling party.

The report got wide coverage in the national press and the publicity helped to build up a climate in which informed discussion became possible. Taking advantage of this, the NPMHR wrote a letter to Justice Chinnappa Reddy, sitting Judge of the Supreme Court, giving details of various atrocities committed by the armed forces in the Naga inhabited areas of Manipur. The letter was admitted by the Judge as a writ petition and notice was issued. This was the first time that the Nagas had moved the Indian Supreme Court.

In support of the NPMHR petition, the People's Union for Democratic Rights (Delhi) filed a 132-

page writ petition challenging the constitutional validity of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958. This is the Act under which the armed forces have been vested with vast powers in the North East. The main argument in the PUDR petition which is pending before the Constitution Bench was that under the Indian Constitution there was no provision for the army to take over civil administration; it could be used only in aid of civil power.

The petition gives various illustrations of how the presence of the army has undermined civilian rule. For instance, in October 1976 the army launched operations and imposed a curfew without a lawful order under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code. The only competent authority to pass an order for curfew is either the District Commissioner or the SDO. At the time the DC was in hospital and the SDO refused to impose curfew on 24 villages because he was not satisfied that such a step was needed. Under the law he is required to be personally satisfied that the condition demands such a step. The army summoned him to the mess but he refused to oblige. Subsequently, the army got the Tehsildar to sign a curfew order, even though he had no authority to do so. The army tried to force the SDO to backdate the order and when he refused he had to face some unpleasantness.

This is just a single example of how the army, once called in under the Act, takes over civil rule. There have been incidents when the District Commissioner has been detained by the army and interrogated. In its affidavit in reply to the petition, the Home Ministry annexed the following certificate purported to have been given by the office bearers in village Huining:

Certificate

'It is certified that the DC of Ukhrul, Mr GP Joshi visited the village Huining Aching on 07 Mar 82 from 0700 hrs to 1100 hrs and instigated the villagers against the security forces. The villagers of Huining Aching were so cooperative with the security forces that they

refused to be instigated by him and on the other hand they praised the security forces for the good treatment meted out to the villagers by the security forces.'

This certificate is supposed to have been signed by members of the village authority, *gram burahs* and a pastor, and countersigned by a captain of the Sikh regiment.

The army collects such 'certificates' after a round of tortures and looting. The background of that particular certificate was an incident of March 1982 at Huining village where the army had called out the villagers and separated the men and women. The women had been pushed into a small church and locked in with their children. They were forced to defecate and urinate in the church. The men were severely beaten up. Two of the most respected men of the village, a headmaster and a pastor, were taken away on March 10, 1982 by the army at the end of three days of torture and beating. They never came back.

Later, a member of the NPMHR, and then student of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Sebastian Hongray, filed a petition for habeas corpus on behalf of the two women whose husbands had been taken away. The Supreme Court issued a writ and observed with regard to the certificates produced by the army: '...it would be legitimate to infer that there was something very despicable in the conduct of the army jawans and therefore to forestall any action they procured certificates which inevitably must be under threat, duress or coercion. Therefore, these certificates leave us cold.'

On 23 April, 1984 the Supreme Court gave an historic judgement in Sebastian Hongray's case and awarded the two widows of C. Paul and C. Danial a sum of one lakh each towards compensation, to be paid by the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Home.

The case is just one dramatic example of how the armed forces had been behaving with impunity. The civilian authorities were unable to

help the villagers channelize their genuine grievances. Under the Armed Forces Act, no suit or legal proceeding can be instituted against anyone acting under the powers given under the Act except with the previous consent of the Central Government. How would the two widows living in a far away Naga village have ever obtained that? And even now hundreds of such women are without any means of voicing their feelings or getting any redressal.

Under the Act, even a junior non-commissioned officer drawing a salary of 650 rupees a month has the power to search, seize and even shoot a person if he suspects that person will disturb public order. Section 4 of the Act which gives such wide arbitrary powers was stayed by the Gauhati High Court. On the intervention of the Assam Government the case was transferred to the Delhi High Court and later dismissed.

This Act comes into operation when either the State Government or the Central Government declares either the State, District or any part of it as disturbed. Once an area has been declared disturbed there is no provision for a review. Further, the amendment of 1972 giving the Central Government the power to declare an area disturbed even without the consent of the State Government is unconstitutional since there the Constitution does not provide for such powers. Article 257A which gave such powers to the centre was repealed by the 44th Amendment to the Constitution in 1978. However, since the Janata Party did not have a majority in the Rajya Sabha, it could not repeal the corresponding entry in the Schedule.

It is significant that even at the time when the Bill was first introduced, members of Parliament expressed their misgivings about its operation. Members of the ruling party as well as members from the opposition, specially those from the North East voiced their doubts in no uncertain terms as the debates in Parliament in 1958 bear testimony.

The observations of P.N. Saprú are relevant: 'I confess that I am not quite happy with this Bill. In the first place, let me say that I have

not been able to appreciate why this Bill was first enacted in the form of an Ordinance. Parliament was sitting here till the 10th of May and the Ordinance was enacted on the 22nd of May. Now, did the emergency or the reasons for it necessitate the issue of this Ordinance? I think ordinarily the power of ordinance-making should not be resorted to when you have the legislature sitting and in this case, I think the Bill could have been brought before us before the 10th of May. I am not suggesting that I am opposing the Bill. For reasons which I shall elaborate I have decided to give my support to the Bill.

'My second criticism of this Bill is that it is a permanent measure and the law which it enacts is of a very drastic character, and it places that law permanently on the Statute book. Now a Bill of this character can be justified on grounds of extreme necessity; I grant that, and I think in the particular case of Assam there is necessity, but a necessity or an emergency or an emergent necessity cannot be a permanent thing. I mean to say, after all, the situation in Assam will improve and improve in one, two or three years...

'The third point which I would like to stress is that once the Governor of Assam or the Chief Commissioner of Manipur decides that a particular area is a disturbed area and he transfers authority to the military to deal with the situation in that area, he goes out of the picture. The civil authority...will thereafter have no control over the situation.'

In 1972 when the Act was amended once again, members of Parliament raised important questions and once again the Act was amended without paying heed to the warnings of the people who spoke from the bitter experience of living under military rule.

The government, unable to solve political and economic problems, is compelled to use the armed forces more and more for the purposes of policing. As the civil administration gets more corrupt because of constant political interference and the bureaucracy is rendered ineffective,

the government has to rely on the army.

The armed forces, unlike the police are trained to use maximum force and to destroy the enemy. When the army is deployed to deal with a situation in which the country's own people are involved, the question arises — who is the enemy? Can a citizen of a country be treated as an enemy to be destroyed by its own armies? And when the armed forces are used for this purpose over a long period, the soldiers become glorified policemen. Counter-insurgency training includes use of torture and use of torture is not only dehumanizing for the victim, it is brutalization of the torturer.

The late General J.N. Chaudhury, former Chief of Army Staff, had warned: 'While one of the tasks given to the military by the government is to aid the civil power in the restoration and maintenance of law and order, overuse of the armed forces in this role cannot only be non-productive, but can actually be harmful ... When the people are alienated from the military, the military themselves get incorrect ideas about their importance in relation to their constitutional role and position. It is really unnecessary to add how undesirable this can be.'

Ignoring the experience of the North East, the warnings of members of Parliament, the generals with experience and, of course, ignoring the suffering and pain of the people, the government passed an ordinance which gave the armed forces the same kind of powers in Punjab and the union territory of Chandigarh. And in October 1983 the Ordinance was converted into the Armed Forces (Punjab and Chandigarh) Special Powers Act, 1983. Another 18 million of our people came under military rule.

This time the Parliament passed the Bill without raising questions. Ordinary people began to be picked up and charged with being 'terrorists'. Housewives and little children were locked up in jails and men were picked up and their near ones could get no news of them. For instance, one housewife at Amritsar who got caught inside the Golden Temple in the operation Bluestar

was sent off to the jail and the husband could not get any news of her through official sources. He had to close down his shop to look after his children. He himself watched seven young men being pulled out of a Gurudwara and their hands were tied behind their backs with their turbans and they were shot dead. Later the post mortem reports said these were 'POWs', a term carelessly used on the occasion.

The indiscriminate arrests, the tortures and the looting have started. The civil administration is being slowly undermined and the people are getting alienated from the army. Anyone who protests against army rule is picked up and dubbed 'terrorist'.

The experience of the North East is now being repeated. The government has once again played the old trick — first create an impossible situation by letting things deteriorate and then move in the armed forces and pose the question purely in terms of whether the army should or should not have been called. However, the question is how did things get to such a pass that the armed forces had to be used and the civil authorities become ineffective.

Even when we read of reports of torture in Punjab which get past the censors, we justify it in terms of national interest and security of the State. We remain silent, as we did all the time the North East was being subjected to brute force. Once again we fall victims to the stereotypes that the government creates of a people it wishes to crush. The Nagas were portrayed as sub-human, cannibals dressed in strange clothes carrying spears and hostile looking. And now we have the portrait of the Sikhs as potential anti-national terrorists with international links carrying arms under their coats.

But this time the government knows people are no longer silent. They have already begun protesting. And the editorial of the *Oking Times* is an expression also of solidarity born out of common suffering. People are more aware and more organized. What shape this awareness and its organization will take will determine the future of our country.

Dealing with disorder

K. F. RUSTAMJI

Democracy has a very bad track record. Among forms of human government, it has been the rare exception and, where it has emerged, it has always seemed to carry with it the seeds of its own destruction ... Even where it has not succumbed to external aggression, it has proved unable to withstand or defend itself against pressure from within, the spendthrifts who disperse its resources, the class warriors who break up its unity ... the pressure groups who try to cajole, corrupt, or intimidate its governments. *Lord Halsham*

ALTHOUGH a policeman, for whom the law is the last word, I dislike reading laws — the slow ponderous word-for-word reading, word-for-word savouring as if it were good wine, the unknown depths, the implications, the hair-splitting interpretations of each word — all that I dislike. I like to race through a page, picking up a word, a phrase, getting the spirit, but not the letter. My reading of the Constitution, I must confess, was also like that. A friend explained to me what the Constitution intended us to do so far as police and law-and-order were concerned, which to my surprise is quite different from what we have done, or have been doing. The Constitution puts the police in the State List — meaning thereby that each State should be able to deal with its own problems. It is not even in the Concurrent List.

The words 'law and order' do not occur anywhere in the Constitution. Only 'public order' is mentioned. True, the Union has a duty to protect the State against internal disturbance, tucked away almost in an after-thought article. 'We, the People of India' had under-estimated the part that the police would play in our triumph and our tragedy.

After Independence, every State began to temporise with law and

order problems, or stopped the police from enforcing the law if there were political implications, and in due course paid the price for it by being unable to control disorder. The Centre readily stepped in to help the States. Para-military forces were expanded and intelligence became a formidable apparatus. Now, hardly any State can deal with serious unrest with its own resources.

Dependence on the Centre began in the early years after independence. Jammu and Kashmir was a State that could not handle its own problems. Frequent intrusions and interference by Pakistan made it necessary for the Centre to help the State with army and para-military forces at regular intervals. Then there were the insurgencies in the North East — Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur — in which the State police were overwhelmed. The language riots in the South, Punjabi Suba disturbances, the Naxalite agitation, all needed Central assistance.

In many communal riots, starting with the steel town riots of 1966, or Aligarh, Jamshedpur, Meerut and Moradabad, the police lost public confidence owing to ineffectiveness, or showed partisan trends, and the Central forces had to be sent in a big way to restore confidence. The latest were the troubles in Punjab, Assam and Bhiwandi. And then there was the Delhi breakdown in November 1984, which gave a severe shock to the police and reduced an already weak morale to danger point. In the years 1983 and 1984 the call-outs of the army became a regular feature — in Bombay the army was called out even to *prevent* a disturbance — and if N.T. Rama Rao had been kept out of office, large parts of the South, certainly the whole of Andhra, may have gone under army rule.

Over the years, the progressive decline of the police went unnoticed.

The fall in the standards of civil police was clearly visible because of the frequent interference with the decisions taken by SHOs. Senior officers were tossed about like shuttlecocks, without realising what its effect on the ranks would be. The distance between officers and men, which was just a crack before Independence, became a yawning gulf, because senior officers did not give enough attention to grievances, or could get no redress for the ranks from government which only reacted to strikes and go-slows, or law and order disasters.

The decline in the armed police too went unnoticed. Corruption in the civil police became an accepted fact. For the armed police, corruption was not possible with the result that their grievances and discontent began to increase and eventually broke out in what was called the 'PAC Mutiny' and the indiscipline in several police forces all over the country in 1977 and later years. Once again, this added to the need for centralization and development of the para-military forces available to the Centre, and the increasing use of the army to deal with internal disturbances.

One would imagine that the increase in para-military strength at the Centre would offset the chances of army aid being sought. To an extent this proved to be correct. In many situations the para military were able to intervene and prevent the disturbance going out of control. But other factors were now beginning to assert themselves — the heavy pressure of unchecked population and the effects of overcrowding, disparities, unemployment (especially educated unemployed), rising expectations, politicisation and, worst of all, freedom itself was being mistaken for licence to terrorise in order to get a following.

In the years 1983 and 1984, police leadership was unable to protect the police forces from terrorist attacks both in Assam and Punjab, which led to a serious drop in performance. It also led to a belief in the police that if there was a situation in which policemen and their families were threatened, the police could avoid taking action,

and no blame would be put on them for their failure. Even the trouble in Punjab owes a great deal to the inability of the police to grasp the nettle of Bhindranwale and his gang firmly, for fear of sectarian unpopularity, and reprisals against policemen and their families.

There is a difference between a soldier and a policeman which is not fully realised. A soldier is anonymous. The policeman is known. The soldier lives in his cantonment or in his barracks in a world of his own, protected and looked after in every way. The policeman usually lives in a shanty. He is known, identified, his family draws water from the same tap as all the others, his children go to the same school, he often gets alcohol from the same illicit still as all the other shantytown dwellers. The policeman sees crime being committed — illicit liquor, drug smuggling, protection rackets, knife attacks — and is unable to intervene because he fears attacks on himself or his family. If the army comes out, it is usually in strength, never less than a platoon. Policemen work in ones and twos.

There is always a feeling of insecurity in the mind of the policeman in a disturbed area. He is usually on edge, even on the verge of panic, because his own safety is in danger. And if there is violence, and firing has to be resorted to, the policeman is up against opposition from all sides, and an enquiry follows. The army has never been questioned for opening fire. If the disturbance goes on for a few days, the jawan gets his cup of tea and his *khana* at regular hours. The policeman is left to starve or scrounge from those who feed him in return for protection, because his officers have neither the means of feeding him and, in many cases, not even the desire to do so.

If there is an army failure, there is no nit-picking while the crisis is on, no contradictory instructions by a dozen agencies wanting to have a say in the handling of the disaster.

Above all, there is a tradition in our Parliament and State Assemblies that army, navy or air force mistakes will not be discussed.

Defence may be criticised. On the other hand, every single peccadillo of a police force is brought to light as a heritage of the freedom struggle.

There is no doubt that the new thinking on police problems as indicated by the Prime Minister (which is identical to what the Third Police Commission had said) that there should be no politicisation of the law-and-order machinery, may help to some extent to rehabilitate the fortunes of the police. It may even give them the confidence to be firm and impartial in dealing with communal and other problems.

But, we should be prepared to face the fact that the crimogenic factors of population, urbanisation, unemployment and so on, will begin to operate in a very powerful way within a few months. So, any measures which are considered essential should be put down as early as possible in the form of institutional arrangements which cannot be easily subverted. Foremost among these would be the State Security Commissions which would give impartial guidance to the State police.

Nothing will work—and we may still end up in chaos if we do not accept the fundamental truth that the law, and what the law enjoins, is above all political machinations and personal prejudices, above all religious doctrines.

Flowing from this is one assumption — that the police must have the ability to enforce the law. The criminal justice system is in such a serious state of decay that even if the police were to prosecute, the decision in the case may take many, many years, during which the evidence even in good cases would become unreliable. So, any reform of the police will not produce results unless the whole of the criminal justice system is revitalised. The easiest way of doing this would be to convert the present Law Commission into a statutory Criminal Justice Commission which would have the power to oversee all aspects of the system — namely, the making of laws, police, judiciary and jails, which would make reform a conti-

nuous process and an organic whole.

Owing to the decay of the criminal justice system, we have ceased to deal with disorder in the normal, logical, legal manner. There is almost no dependence on punishment in a court of law. We depend only on police pressure by means of arrests, firing, detentions, even torture, and to such an extent that to the new generation of police officers the universal method of policing which excludes punishment seems antiquated and ineffective. A further refinement of this trend is visible in the police abstaining from taking action, leaving it to mobs to inflict whatever punishment a frenzied and totally irresponsible group may inflict on those selected by them for punishment.

In the process thousands may be killed, tens of thousands rendered homeless, State property worth crores may be destroyed, millions of people may get uprooted and their lives totally disrupted — but we do not consider the matter serious enough to plan corrective measures. We can only think of calling out the army each time — and in most call-outs there is an element of delay, even disinclination to do a job which is not theirs, and the result is that the riot spends itself in exhaustion; but the presence of the army does prevent a recrudescence. Then credits are handed out to the government for the effective manner in which the trouble was nipped in the bud.

Are we so blind that we cannot see the danger in this method of dealing with disorder? Has this not created the feeling in the minds of millions, especially members of the minority communities, that the army is their ultimate saviour — army impartiality is their only protection — that police, courts, even governments and political personalities, do not matter when the mob rises in anger? Does this not imply, in addition, that secularism is only a word meant for international prestige, that the politics of disorder will deteriorate into agendas of extermination, and they will weaken the land, the strength of which is its tenacious diversity and its cultural pluralism.

If we want to save the country from serious breakdowns, we have to give police reform a special place in the priorities of government. And if the police functions effectively, the need to summon the army again and again in aid to civil power will be reduced.

Dependence on the army is providing an easy method for State administrations to evade responsibility. Besides, it impairs army training and disrupts the isolation in which the army must live in peace time. In any case, easily available army help breeds neglect of police development.

First, the method of calling out the army should be made more difficult and in small matters the army should be permitted to refuse the call, if they feel that it is unjustified. In fact, orders exist that States should develop the ability of the police force to meet all situations with their own resources and not call out the army, except as the last resort, and in very unusual circumstances. But these orders have steadily been ignored. I am even prepared to say that if once or twice the army does not respond, there may be some situations which are difficult to control, but the States will soon learn that if they do not nip trouble in the bud, or build up the police force in a competent and effective manner, they will have to pay a big price for it.

The neglect of the police, which the Prime Minister referred to recently, will stop at once if the States are told the truth in plain language that Central para-military forces are so heavily committed that they cannot be spared. The manner in which we have squandered all para-military reserves is an index of the general ignorance of the fact that reserves are the real strength of any law enforcement agency. In fact, the importance of manpower conservation is unknown. Reform consists only in adding numbers to the police force, not in increasing the powers and capability of each constable.

As a corollary to this, the Centre will have to help the States with funds and advice to improve police

capability. The Centre today has sufficient strength. It is the States that need a boost to their resources and confidence. They should be prepared in advance with plans to improve their capability.

The performance of the Home Guards, which has been good in most of the States, could be strengthened by giving a hard core of permanent officers up to the company or platoon level, improving mobility and training, and ensuring that conditions of service are periodically reviewed. The limitation of strength which was imposed some years ago in the interest of economy should be removed, mainly in the interest of economy, because it is far easier to expand the Home Guards than the police.

The armed police battalions of the States have been misused, ill-treated, given the worst officers, and least training. In many States they have become partisan and undependable. All the State armed police battalions need thorough reorganization, central direction, inspection and, perhaps, a central enactment to enforce uniform standards. This reform will be in the interests of the States, irrespective of their political alliance, and could be part-funded by the Centre.

The NCC should be used at times when the pressure of duties on the police and Home Guards is heavy. They can take over guard duties and many other duties commensurate with their training and organization.

Citizen readiness to help the law and order authority should be encouraged in the form of *mohalla* committees.

Lastly, we must recognise that the law makes us civilised, and we have to plan step-by-step law enforcement in which the main responsibility is that of the State police. The State police must deal with all situations in time, and they must be helped to develop vigilance, anticipation, and effectiveness by the Centre. For too long have we tolerated the slide into disorder due to inept State leadership, both in the political and administrative fields.

Crutches

M. L. THAPAN

SPEAKING in the House of Commons on the India Independence Bill in February 1947, Sir Winston Churchill, then Leader of the Opposition, said: 'In handing over the Government of India to those so called political classes, we are handing over to men of straw, of whom, in a few years, no trace will remain... Let us not add — by shameful flight, by a premature, hurried scuttle — to the pangs of sorrow so many of us feel, the taint and smear of shame.'

Churchillian imperialism or prescient utterance? The reader may judge for himself when evaluating our State, thirty seven years after Independence.

The role of the armed forces in a democracy will bear repetition. Primarily, it is to defend the country against external aggression. A secondary role, in times of peace, is to assist the civil administration in the maintenance of internal security, and to provide succour to the civil population during natural calamity. A fairly simple and straight-forward role, which is taught to every serviceman on entry, and repeated at intervals during his service, to serve as a reminder. There will be few who will deny that, over the years, the armed forces have, to the best of their ability, performed these roles honourably. We need not cavil at contentious issues such as the Chinese aggression of 1962, where such performance may have been in doubt, since these are not relevant to the scope of this essay.

The charter of the civil administration is less clearly defined; its observance, by and large, perfunctory. The serviceman's understanding of good government, broadly, is: sensitivity to the hopes and aspirations of its people, genuine service (as opposed to professed concern) towards their welfare, maintenance of law and order, impartiality, fair play, speedy dispensation of justice,

and a ready accessibility of government functionaries to the people.

This understanding, perhaps, is also not very different from that of the young civil servant during the probationary period spent at his training institutions; but it soon undergoes transformation when he is cast adrift on the Sargasso Sea of modern Indian administration. It is there that he meets his match in the politician, whose ideas of administration are disarmingly simple. Priority one is self-preservation, priority two is self-promotion; other priorities are attention to measures to secure the attainment of the first two. Unlimited private service is considered to be the best form of public service.

A distinguished chief secretary of Madhya Pradesh has recounted his experience with a newly appointed Chief Minister, who desired to be educated as to the division of duties between the two of them. The chief secretary suggested that the Chief Minister should concern himself with broad matters of policy. The chief secretary would be available for advice, at the formulation stage, on the practical implications of such policy, and be responsible for its execution, once it was decided to put it into effect. In addition, as the principal civil servant, all matters concerning service discipline, promotion, postings and transfers, would be his responsibility.

The Chief Minister thanked him for his advice and said that, personally, he would prefer a reversal of the two roles. He would look after routine administration, whilst the chief secretary should devote himself to policy matters. It would have been amusing if it were only political or administrative naivete which prompted the putting forward of this ridiculous proposition. Today, it seems to have become standard operational procedure.

The administrative framework we inherited at Independence, stood the test of time and was fundamentally sound. Though much maligned in the usual hackneyed terms as being a colonial legacy, no politician has come up with a better alternative, or has had the political courage to replace it. Older residents of villages in the rural area where I live, speak nostalgically of the tours, every winter, of the deputy commissioner of the District. He moved on horseback, set up camp in tents, listened to petitions and complaints, settled minor disputes on the spot; dealt with malefactors and was generally regarded as a father figure, approachable and human. 'What a contrast to the present day!', a retired Subedar Major and Honorary Captain, who is in his eighties, told me. 'The Deputy Commissioner has no time to see us, even when we wait on him. Letters to him are not even acknowledged. He has never once visited our village. All we see of even the *tehsildar* is the dust of his jeep.'

Another grizzled veteran commented: 'Today's power operators are no longer government officials but these self-proclaimed *netas*. They come to us every five years with folded hands to ask for our votes. Once they are seated on the "chair", they have no time for us. You can recognise them easily — they all wear white caps, but their stomachs and palms always stick out.' And, speaking of the events of the Punjab over the past two years, before the army action, they said: 'What kind of government is it which allows indiscriminate murders to take place daily, and has not the will to stop them? Even the cold blooded murder of one of its own high ranking officials — a Deputy Inspector General of Police — on the steps of the Golden Temple does not stir it out of its apathy? How can people respect such an administration?'

It is easier to destroy institutions than to build them, and the effects of the deliberate weakening of our administrative edifice are now only too apparent. Mis-employment and corrosion of the steel frame, once the envy of our less fortunate neighbours, has led to increasing dependence on the armed forces in the maintenance of law and order.

Constitutionally, the Union of India has a firm democratic base. The governments of both the Union and the States are elected by popular vote and adult franchise permits every voter to exercise his or her preference. Governments serve for a fixed period of time and the Constitution provides for well-established procedures to dismiss governments who are guilty of dereliction of duty. The maintenance of law and order is the responsibility of State governments. To assist them are States' cadres of police, both armed and unarmed and, at the Centre, there is the Central Reserve Police on whom calls for additional assistance may be made. In grave emergency, units of the Border Security Force can also be made available.

In such a democratic environment, and with the plethora of forces now available to keep the peace, it is difficult to understand why there should be constant need to call out the army at the first signs of trouble in places such as Assam and, more recently, in Bhiwandi and Bombay. The army has been locked up for decades in peace-keeping functions, in the States of Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram. The case of Punjab is discussed later. The army's presence could be explained when insurgency was rife in these areas, and they had not been formally delineated into States. After the installation of 'popular' governments, however, such presence is difficult to justify.

Have we now formally entered a grey area where 'popular' rule and 'insurgency' can co-exist indefinitely? This would be a dangerous admission on two main counts. Firstly, the credentials of 'popular' governments installed under such conditions become suspect. If they cannot function without the presence of the army, they are obviously not 'popular' and, therefore, should make way for direct Presidential rule. Secondly, the efficacy of the State law enforcement agencies, backed by para-military forces, is brought seriously into question.

If the army has to be brought in regardless, there is something very wrong with the civil law enforcement apparatus. Or is it that they are being maligned without having been given a fair change? Crutches

may be needed when there is an injury to a leg; they are discarded when it has healed; they are not a permanent means of locomotion. Diversion of the army to perform routine police functions seriously interferes with its operational preparedness for its primary role.

There are other implications, too, in the frequent or continued use of the armed forces, in providing aid to civil authority in preference to the normal law enforcement agencies. Soldiers, sailors and airmen, rightly, are kept insulated from the routine rough and tumble of day to day politics as practised in India — *morchas*, processions, rallies, *bandhs* and such demonstrations. Constant exposure of troops to communal, or other trouble which comes in their wake, belittles the effectiveness of civil administrations, leading to the adoption of attitudes of contempt. Service officers tend to become off-hand with civil officials, who are seldom on the scene when violence erupts. This is hardly conducive to the maintenance of harmonious relations between the two.

After peace has been restored, there is the usual hunt for scapegoats and a great deal of mud-slinging at the high-handed actions of the 'security forces', a generic term, which includes the army if it has been employed, even though it may be free of guilt. This engenders resentment at the lack of appreciation, and induces a feeling of being called upon to perform a thankless task even before it has begun.

Not that the army is always blameless. No one likes being shot at and if there are occasional instances of the principle of minimum force being violated, in retaliation by the army, they are only the hazards of their employment. In operating against the insurgents in the Eastern Sector, there have been excesses caused as much by faulty or inadequate intelligence supplied by civil agencies, as by the forces' over-reaction. The poor quality of intelligence is a major handicap to the army when it is called out, usually at a moment's notice.

The course of events in the Punjab over the past two years or so, is a

classic example of the degradation of the old adage, from 'that government governs best that governs least', to 'that government which governs least, governs not at all'. If ever there was a self-inflicted injury caused to the body of our nation State by sheer abdication of responsibility, this was it. The Partition of 1947 had resulted in grievous loss to the State of Punjab; it was painfully rebuilt in the following years, through the efforts of a proud and industrious people. Whatever may have been the merits or demerits of its further sub-division in 1966, the placing of the future of its new capital of Chandigarh in suspended animation, and linking it with that of the districts of Abohar and Fazilka, was a political error of the first magnitude.

Political solutions are seldom clear cut, but when surgery is resorted to, the operation must be complete and no cancerous growth left inside to fester. Subsequent political demands for the restoration of Chandigarh to Punjab, linked with the equitable division of river waters and other religious demands, have not been faced with determination, or with the resolve to hammer out a solution, howsoever indigestible it may be to some, within a set time frame. The result has been the alienation of a proud, virile and militant community.

The art of governing a people as diverse as ours, is to give them a sense of belonging, of participation; of recognition of their genuine wants, and the exhibition of endless patience to discuss their grievances, real or imaginary. All this must be done with the reins of government fully in hand. There have been, and always will be, political hot-heads and extremists who prefer the path of violence to that of negotiation to achieve their aims. With them, governments must be firm and not lose their cool. Whole communities must not be identified with these malcontents. When, for example, the Akalis threatened to disrupt the Asian Games at Delhi, there was no justification to subject all Sikhs entering Delhi to humiliating search and interrogation. Surely, the govern-

ment had other means at its disposal to prevent interference.

This public humiliation, perhaps, provided the spark to light the flame of armed militancy in the Punjab. And when this militancy did explode into almost daily acts of arson and indiscriminate killing, what was there to prevent the government from exercising its lawful responsibility to protect the lives and property of its citizens? Even when the State was put under President's rule, and substantial reinforcements of para-military forces had been inducted, there was a curious reluctance to deal with criminals who had sought sanctuary in places of worship and elsewhere, or to make the strong arm of the law felt.

Much is sought to be made, after the army's action in the Golden Temple, of the alleged transference of loyalty of the State's administrative agencies to the extremists, which prevented effective action being taken earlier. If this is true, then the blame must be placed squarely on the previous 'popular' governments who were either ignorant of, or indifferent to, the political proclivities of their civil servants. It was fashionable, some years ago, to speak of 'committed' civil servants. For those who still entertain such notions, the chickens truly have come home to roost.

It might be worthwhile, for a moment, to examine the foundations of good administration. To begin with, there must be a clear understanding of the division of functions between the politician and the administrator. Whatever responsibilities are assigned to the administrator, they must be in his sole charge and he must be accountable for all lapses. The moment there is interference by outside agencies in his charge, he ceases to be responsible. He can function effectively only if he has the full backing of his superior. Administration operates in tiers of command, each having designated responsibilities. These must not be by-passed or short-circuited if the system is to survive.

It does not require much perspicacity to discern that govern-

ment cannot be conducted on the alternative basis of empty slogan-mongering, or by exhortatory cries of *Jai Hind*, or by ministers dispensing grace and favour, or by their controlling the postings of humble public servants such as head constables, drivers and *chaprassis*.

The continued employment of the army in the Punjab has brought into sharp focus the inadequacy, or otherwise, of the normal State law enforcement agencies. Even if it is conceded that the State police need reorganisation and overhaul, are the Central Reserve Police and the Border Security Force also to be dismissed as being ineffective? The training and arming of these disciplined forces is of a high standard. Having been inducted from outside the State, they are, presumably, non-partisan; their command, control and transport resources permit swifter deployment and response than the local police. By relying solely on the army, are these para-military forces to be written off?

Added to this, there has been talk of raising yet another special force — the National Security Guard — whose precise functions are still to be spelt out. Juvenal's comment, made nearly two millennia ago is, perhaps, apt: *'Quis custodiet ipsos Custodes?'* (Who is to guard the guards themselves?) It is a saddening thought that, after this lapse of time, we have yet to attain political and administrative maturity.

The rights and wrongs of the army action in the Golden Temple have been the subject of much febrile comment. *Homo Sapiens* notwithstanding, irrationality is part of human nature, especially in matters of theology. The Sikhs are deeply hurt at the storming of the Temple and the destruction so caused. The wise administrator will respect the depth of this feeling and regulate his future actions in the light of this melancholy episode, remembering that drift is an invitation to disaster. There are, however, three military aspects which should exercise those concerned with administration.

The first is the degree of consultation that took place between the civil authorities and the army, prior

to its employment. The Punjab kettle had been kept on low heat for more than eighteen months and during that period, from reports which have now appeared, there was a deliberate, active programme conducted by the extremists to suborn the loyalties of Sikh troops serving in the army. Sikh soldiers on leave in the Punjab are reported to have been administered an oath at the Golden Temple to be true to their faith when the call came. There were reports that, later, seditionists, in the garb of religious preachers, were sent to major Sikh units to spread the gospel. This was apart from the free distribution of literature and cassette recordings of Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale's inflammatory speeches.

One does not know how far these reports are true, but the lingering impasse in the Punjab alone should have caused both civil and military authorities grave disquiet as to its possible repercussions on both service officers and servicemen. That the Ministry of Defence seemed to operate in a vacuum became only too apparent when, after mutiny and armed desertions had taken place, it issued an astonishing press statement soft-pedalling the incidents and announced that full death, disability and family benefits would be paid to casualties amongst such personnel on par with those sustained in the army action in the Punjab.

Fortunately, the Army Chief's subsequent televised broadcast put these grave acts of indiscipline in their proper perspective. This, together with the very short notice given to the army to clear the Temple, leave nagging doubts as to whether the consultation between the civil and military authorities was as close as it should have been. Perhaps, this is a lesson for the army not to stand on ceremony about who should open the conversation first. They should have remembered their having been bitten earlier, in 1962, when given peremptory orders to 'throw out the Chinese'.

The second aspect, partly military, concerns the nation as a whole. The Indian Armed Forces, so far,

have prided themselves on retaining an apolitical identity. Though exposed to the elements of the murky Indian political milieu, they have stood aloof and concentrated on the performance of their assigned roles. In the past, too, they have been called upon to aid civil power in quelling internal unrest which in the main, however, has taken the form of communal disturbances.

For the first time now, in the Punjab, the army is involved in major policing functions, quelling political unrest amongst a community from whom many of its own soldiers are drawn. It is operating in a border State, whose neighbour, if one goes by past experience, is not particularly well disposed towards us, and whose capacity for stirring up antipathy towards India amongst the Sikhs is pronounced. The search and arrest operations which the army is now being called upon to perform, have already earned it mounting opprobrium from its own people, and its role as defender of the country's freedom is being subjected to increasing ridicule. If prolonged, this ridicule could convert itself into active non-cooperation during a future conflict with our western neighbour — a distinctly embarrassing prospect.

The third aspect. Mutiny and armed desertion are serious military offences which leave their mark not only on the units concerned, but the army as a whole. Mutiny, in modern times, is rare; when it has taken place it is because of weak leadership and poor man-management. Such damage is repairable. Desertions with arms also occur; they are generally isolated individual cases, the motive generally being to highlight an unredressed grievance, or a hidden preference for an outlaw's career. When, however, any mass deviation occurs on grounds of ideology, it causes irreparable damage to the whole fabric of the brotherhood of arms which is held together by invisible strands of comradeship and trust.

In battle, a soldier is trained to look to his front, for that is where the enemy is. The tactical and administrative support which he receives comes from the rear, or

laterally; he does not have to look over his shoulder to satisfy himself that it is coming. Loss of trust in a comrade is the most serious psychological damage which could be caused to a soldier. It takes ages to repair and relations are never the same again. The army will take time to recover from this trauma. Meanwhile, it is to be sincerely hoped that appropriate lessons have been drawn by all those concerned with national security, of the dangers of needlessly dragging in the armed forces to pull political chestnuts out of the fire.

In retrospect, the patient has not responded to the shock treatment. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his confreres, who died in the action at the Golden Temple, are now regarded by most Sikhs as martyrs. The demand for Khalistan by Sikhs abroad is more strident than ever before. The leadership of the Akali Party is likely to pass into the hands of extremists, their erstwhile leaders all having been under detention; and the prospects of a political settlement, acceptable to all concerned, more distant than at any time prior to June 1984.

The army operates in a state of acute embarrassment in the Punjab and, if we are not to go back quite to square one, let there at least be a resolve, by civil administrations, to reform themselves, to shed their dependence on the armed forces and to run their charges with their own resources as in other civilised countries. Otherwise, like the young lady of Niger, who could not resist the ride, they run the risk of ending up inside, with the smile on the face of the tiger.

And should they feel secure that, in view of the heterogeneous character of the armed forces, this is an unlikely prospect, perhaps they could dwell on the alternative cheerless possibility of the forces disintegrating, having been subjected to unbearable regional pressures, through continued mis-employment on policing duties, thus paving the road to ultimate Balkanisation. The choice is clear. As Henry Ford, the car manufacturer, advertised: 'You can have your Model T in any colour you like, so long as it is black.'

The faces of terrorism

E. A. VAS

THERE is a great deal of difference between insurgency and terrorism. Insurgency is a form of warfare which has many names: guerilla war, peoples' war or revolutionary war, in which insurgents have limited resources and freedom of action. Terrorism is often used as a weapon in a revolutionary war but it cannot be a substitute for the war itself. There are several pre-requisites for a revolutionary war: a cause, which in this case is Khalistan; a dedicated hard core of extremists; a source of supply of weapons; popular support; a foreign sanctuary and local sanctuaries such as gurudwaras or sympathetic urban residents.

Fortunately, Punjab unlike Nagaland or Mizoram, has a clearly defined and easily patrolled international border with Pakistan, and there are no mountainous jungles which could provide secret bases for locals which could be difficult for the security forces to detect. To that extent it is impossible for Sikh insurgents to conduct a prolonged revolutionary war if the intelligence agencies and security forces know their business.

Terrorism has always been distinguished from other forms of political violence associated with the conduct of a legitimate campaign against a repressive regime, usually of a despotic, military or fascist type. Although Sikh, Naga and Mizo terrorists may argue that they are revolutionaries seeking to overthrow a corrupt government, liberal democracies clearly view terrorism as a criminal rather than a political offence. The resort to violence by non-elected groups for achieving

political ends in a democracy is an illegitimate and unjustifiable use of force.

While it would be impossible to discuss the various typologies of terrorism, it will be useful to outline some broad concepts. Terrorism in the Punjab is not the outcome of spontaneous anger but is carefully planned and organised violence for effect; not on the actual victims of the terrorists but aimed at Sikh and non-Sikh onlookers. Fear is the intended effect, not the by-product of terrorism. The terrorist's aim is to destroy the confidence which the Sikhs have in the government by causing them to act outside the law; to bring about the moral alienation of the Sikh masses from the government until its isolation becomes total and irreversible; to make life unbearable for a democratic administration so long as the terrorists' demands remain unsatisfied.

Some attempt to classify terrorism and differentiate its various forms by referring to the goal towards which each type of terrorism is directed. By this method, Punjab's terrorism could be described as, firstly, organisational terrorism designed to maintain internal discipline, inhibit penetration by government agents and punish errant members.

Secondly, allegiance terrorism designed to create mass support in the form of funds, strikes, morchas and safe houses for sanctuary.

Thirdly, functional terrorism designed to gain tactical advantage by isolating civil servants and the police by virtue of their administra-

tive functions and making them targets of assassination.

Fourthly, provocative terrorism designed to exploit the effects of a violent act and escalate its impact. Fifthly, manipulative terrorism designed to create a bargaining situation in which threats are made to destroy a hijacked aircraft or kill hostages unless certain demands are met. Lastly, symbolic terrorism where the victim is selected because he or she represents the epitome of the 'enemy'.

Professionals prefer to distinguish between three broad types of terrorism aimed at political revolution, sub-revolutionary terrorism having political or other motives less than revolution, and repressive terrorism aimed at restraining certain groups, individuals or forms of behaviour deemed to be undesirable. Revolutionary terrorism aims at effecting a complete change in the political system: in this case secession and the establishment of Khalistan. Revolutionary terrorism is usually practised in conjunction with a revolutionary war.

Sub-revolutionary terrorism aims at effecting various changes in the political system or administration other than total revolution: the re-distribution of canal waters; the declaration of Chandigarh as Punjab's sole capital; the acceptance of religious demands. Repressive terrorism is undertaken to maintain internal discipline; to collect funds; to inhibit penetration by the CBI and CID; to punish errant Sikhs; to murder Nirankaris and intimidate the administration by killing those who dare to oppose the terrorists.

In the Punjab, the three strands of terrorism: the revolutionary, sub-revolutionary and repressive, have had no common leadership or central authority, and have had different origins in terms of time and leadership. But a common feature to all is finances; a vital precondition to meet the heavy expense of weapons, ammunition, explosives and pin-money for the hard core terrorists. Apart from donations from sympathetic individuals and hostile foreign powers, terrorists plan on stealing arms and ammunition from military

and police depots. They also undertake a series of bank robberies and demand enforced donations from Sikh and non-Sikh businessmen and industrialists through terror.

The post-1920 period had witnessed the institutionalisation of Sikh urges and aspirations in the form of the Siromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC). This gave the Sikhs a semblance of independent power in religious, social and cultural matters. Thus, though socio-economic factors including neglect, isolation, poverty and unemployment may help to explain aspects which support terrorism in Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura and Mizoram, those factors obviously do not apply in the Punjab where terrorists conform to a typical sociological profile of European terrorist groups: single, male, aged 20-30, having at least a partial university education, with an affluent middle-class family background and deriving much of his motivation from frustration, and anarchist or nihilist notions.

The Akali Party's demand for a separate State had come up again and again from 1942 onwards when the British first began serious negotiation to reach a settlement about India's freedom. Sir Stafford Cripps has recorded (1942) that the Sikhs were anxious to carve out 'a separate Sikh area'. When the Cabinet Mission came to India, a Sikh delegation consisting of Master Tara Singh, Giani Kartar Singh and Sardar Harnam Singh demanded a 'separate independent State with the right to federate with Hindustan or Pakistan.' The Akalis kept reiterating this demand in the name of the Sikhs and not in that of the Punjabis. They maintained this position upto the transfer of power. Their demands are historically well documented.

Partition brought about cataclysmic changes in the fortunes of the Sikhs. The separate electorates and special privileges they enjoyed were abolished and the most prosperous Sikhs were uprooted. The community's separate identity had to be re-asserted in a secular State in which they formed less than two per cent of the population. The moderates hoped to carve out a State where they could be assured a

majority in which Khalsa traditions could be maintained and where they could also wield political power. This was the motivating force behind the Punjabi Suba movement which was given a linguistic bias. But behind these non-violent aspirations lurked a hard core of separatists and extremists.

Millions of educated Sikhs and non-Sikhs are under the misconception that the Akali Dal has never raised the separatist demand for Khalistan. In fact, the demand came up again and again in Akali negotiations with the British before Independence. Up to the first two decades after Partition, the Akali Party continued to represent the revolutionary strand of Sikh politics. However, it must be admitted that terrorism in support of their cause was never demonstrated at that time.

Perhaps, other distressing circumstances that prevailed on both Hindu and Sikh Punjabis before, during and after the greater common terrors of Partition absorbed everyone's attention; survival became of greater importance than terrorism. It may also be noted that for the same reasons the other two strands of terrorism, the sub-revolutionary and repressive, also remained dormant till the sixties.

The rise of fundamentalism as spearheaded by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale must be understood as an attempt to preserve the separate identity of the Khalsa Panth. The Sikhs have always combined religion with politics along with a tradition of authoritarianism sprinkled with an exaggerated belief in the martial qualities of their principal actors. Thus, Bhindranwale, the obscurantist, became a convenient charismatic rallying point for the All-India Sikh Students' Federation (AISSF), militant extremists and coldblooded terrorists. When Sant Bhindranwale first launched his 'dharam yudh', a religious crusade to protect and purify the Sikh faith, he moved his headquarters to the Golden Temple at Amritsar. The movement did not attract significant response. But by now, Bhindranwale and his fanatical followers represented the sub-revolutionary strand of terrorism; their

demands were religious in nature but their methods were violent.

Meanwhile, the Akali Party, sensing Bhindranwale's growing popularity, was determined not to be left behind in the race of exploiting religious politics. The Anandpur Saheb Resolution (1973) smacks of the pre-Independence manifesto of the Muslim League. The strategy and tactics adopted by the Akalis is identical to that adopted by the Muslim League. Firstly, couch the separatist demand in terms that are open to a variety of interpretation; this gives flexibility to the Akali leadership in negotiating a new constitution and brings into one fold not only those Sikhs committed to Khalistan but also those who entertain grave doubts about separation. Secondly, claim that the Anandpur Resolution is being made not in the name of the Akalis but in that of all the Sikhs.

The Akali tactics also mirrored those of the Muslim League: demand the maximum and stick to this to the very last; make no compromise without exacting a price; accept no price in hypothetical or contingent future terms; let the ruling party make its own public mistakes but keep your own cards close to the chest; if you have to retreat from making maximum demands, cover the rear by continuing to assert them for the future; if you have to compromise your demands for the sake of a prompt bargain, withdraw the compromise if the price is not paid as you may do better next time and are most unlikely to do worse.

By this time, the SGPC had become a State within a State with an annual budget of Rs. 250 crores and activities which encompass schools, colleges, hospitals, missions and *sewadars* spread throughout India and the world. Once he had gained influence as a religious leader, Sant Bhindranwale began his odyssey in Sikh politics by putting up 30 candidates in the SGPC elections against Akali candidates. The struggle between these two forces was viewed from varying points of view: haves versus have-nots, moderates versus extremists, rural versus urban.

But, whatever that be, this battle for the capture of the real source of Sikh power increased tensions. The situation became over-charged when the frustrated Akali leaders also moved their headquarters into the Golden Temple and coalesced their political and economic agitations with religious demands; a massive public response was generated under the rallying call 'the Panth is in danger'.

Meanwhile, proclaimed criminals and Nirankari murderers from the Babbar Khalsa which represented repressive terrorism, when pursued by the police, also sought refuge in the Golden Temple. The three strands of terrorism were now united though they still functioned under separate rival leadership. The compulsions of internal rivalries between these factions saw the rise of competitive violence with each faction trying to out-do the other.

The period from 1980 till June 1984 provides a gruesome record of terrorism in the Punjab: murder, hijacking, arson and loot were a frequent occurrence. Hundreds of innocent victims were killed in cold blood. God-fearing Sikhs knew that by giving refuge to killers, their religious and political leaders were guilty of being accessories before and after the crime, and of obstructing the course of justice, but it required courage to dissent under the fear of being put on the hit list; lest we forget, up to January 1984, of the 220 people killed by terrorists, 190 were Sikhs. The government law and order agencies seemed helpless in the face of this organised terrorism.

Whilst identifying the forms of terrorism practised by non-governmental agencies, we should not overlook that terrorism may also be practised by official agents who act to curb or eliminate dissent. Thus, it is imperative that security forces be disciplined and function under strict supervision in accordance with the laws of the land.

Most democratic nations, therefore, have special forces trained to deal with terrorists. Israeli commandos earned fame after their

spectacular Entebbe Raid when hostages were rescued from Uganda. The West Germans have their Grenzschutzgruppe 9 (GSG-9) and the French their Groupe d'intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale (GIGN). The US has Special Forces, Rangers and Green Berets, but confess that they have a lot to learn from the British Special Air Services (SAS) which has a reputation of being the world's finest counter terrorist unit and a trend setter for the others.

The SAS shares with the Brigade of Guards a deep respect for quality and battle discipline, but unlike the Guards it has little respect for drill and turnout because it approaches warfare and violence in an entirely unorthodox manner. During World War II, collaboration with the Long Range Desert Group, the 1st. SAS Regiment conducted raids behind Rommel's lines in the Western Desert. After the war, the unit fought with distinction in Malaysia; working in small 4-man patrols, the SAS penetrated deep into the Malaya jungle to hunt down and defeat communist guerrillas. Since then it has taken part in numerous successful but little-publicised anti-terrorist operations including the clearing of the Grand Mosque in Mecca.

The reaction of Captain C.A. Beckworth, USA. Special Forces, when he first went on attachment to 22 nd SAS Regiment bears repetition.¹ He found the exterior and surrounding grounds meticulously maintained, but the inside of a building resembled 'more of a football locker room than an army barrack' with two soldiers brewing tea on the floor in the middle of the room. He commented on the state of the room and the men; he added that the area should be 'mopped, the equipment cleaned, straightened and stored, and the tea brewed outside.' The two soldiers spoke up at once. 'No Sir. That's not what we want to do. Otherwise we might as well go back to our regular regiments. One of the reasons we volunteered for the SAS was so we

1: *Delta Force*, by Colonel Charlie A. Beckworth, USA (Ret) and Donald Knox, Arms & Armour Press, Great Britain, 1984.

shouldn't have to worry about the unimportant things.' The American could not understand this and thought that he had joined a rabble outfit.

The SAS selects its officers and other ranks with care. It takes about two years to find volunteers who are inquisitive, resourceful, imaginative, patient yet extremely aggressive. Men who can function under severe constraints yet be free-thinking individuals; operate with or without orders; be able to lead and follow; withstand prolonged physical and mental stress and endure extended monotony. No member of a SAS unit is given a cap badge when he joins the unit; he has to earn it or get out.

Many, to begin with, find it difficult to make head or tail of the SAS ethos. This is not unusual as the unit resembles no military organisation. Everything a regular has been taught about soldiering will be turned up side down. But one will soon discover that there is method in this madness; a healthy environment prevails and a lot gets done. The Regiment is very professional. The training is extremely tough and a high degree of initiative is encouraged.

The first phase of a volunteer's life in the SAS is called the Selection Phase. Along with physical stress, trainees are faced with psychological and ethical tests. Men are pushed to the very extreme of physical and mental hardship. The SAS looks for men who will reach down within themselves to find those qualities which they hardly know they possess; to push themselves and have the guts to keep going. Again and again, the point driven home is that the SAS is not playing games; it is in a deadly serious business.

At the end of a gruelling physical and mental examination, an SAS Board will tell a prospective candidate that he should be proud: he has proved himself fit. But then it will add: 'Now, tell us what you didn't do well.' Men who cannot articulate their inadequacies do not become members of the Regiment. Sometimes, a whole class of volunteers are failed.

The Germans have recorded that during the 1972 Olympics in Munich, at the moment the shooting began, two of their security sharpshooters on the scene, who had the terrorists in their sights, failed to fire their weapons. Their marksmanship had been assured; their resolve had not. Their hesitation led to the death of a number of Israeli athletes. The Germans then raised the GSG-9 and adopted SAS selection and training methods. Five years later, in Somalia, when the German GSG-9 assaulted a hijacked aircraft on the ground at Mogadishu, all four terrorists, were dealt with without the loss of a single hostage.

In India, the role of special forces has been allotted to the Border Security Force (BSF). The Commando unit of the BSF which is reportedly trained to deal with terrorists and hijackers, was first employed at Calcutta in 1980 when a Bangladeshi hijacked a plane and held its passengers hostage at Dum Dum airport. When the BSF commandos, who were flown in from Delhi, surrounded the grounded plane, the hijacker detained the crew who were visible in the cockpit, but allowed the passengers to leave the plane. The BSF then entered the empty cabin and with weapons at the 'ready', edged slowly towards the cockpit, flung open the door and found no sign of the hijacker; he had ordered the crew to remain seated and had disembarked with the passengers.

The commando now rushed out of the aircraft and began trying to trace the hijacker from amongst a milling crowd of passengers, anxious relatives and gaping spectators. No passenger could identify the hijacker as he had been in the cockpit with the crew; he had coolly joined the tail of the queue as the relieved passengers had streamed out of the aircraft.

In the confusion which ensued, it was fortunate that drama was prevented from deteriorating into farce when the hijacker was apprehended as he was about to board a taxi. But the BSF was disappointed; they had been training very hard and by all accounts were fighting fit and

itching for action. Now that the Punjab was in flames, one expected that the BSF commando would be blooded in active operations.

If the terrorists hoped to provoke a political over-reaction and force the State to drop its constitutional mask, it failed. Far from undermining the popular base of the Union, terrorist attacks on innocent people produced a feeling of outrage. (In fact, some have even suggested that the ruling party deliberately delayed action in the Punjab in order to provoke a swing in the Hindu vote in its favour.) But terrorism cannot be dispelled by outrage nor be legislated out of existence; an assumption that owes something to the traditional belief that political conflicts can be solved with administrative means which often ignore the sociological and psychological roots of violence.

The problems facing all democratic governments is to act without infringing individual rights. (One of the insurgent's tactics is to hope that this will happen through their provocation.) There is a legal lacuna facing the challenge of organised terrorism; Indian laws and the Penal Code make no real provision for terrorism so action has to be limited to the use of criminal law and the use of the BSF and the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) backed by appropriate laws. Thanks to three decades of experience in dealing with terrorism and insurgency in north-eastern India, the government had developed internal security know-how.

Although the existing procedures have flaws (in coordination, control and execution which cannot be discussed in this paper,) the government was in a position to promulgate the Disturbed Areas Act promptly. Cordon and search operations were started by the paramilitary forces with the army standing by. Nevertheless, by April 1984, a point was reached when terrorism, as emanating from agencies lodged in the Golden Temple became so blatant and the para-military forces so ineffective, that the question for the Indian Union was one not only of self-preservation but also self-assertion;

its existence as a State capable of acting was challenged.

In June 1984, the army was ordered to launch Operation Blue-star and clear the Golden Temple complex. When this was completed, press reports began to appear expressing disapproval 'at the increasing involvement of the armed forces in the management of affairs in what is tantamount to a breakdown of civil power.' Whereas there is much truth in this criticism, the public seemed blissfully unaware that the army had been used 369 times during the period from 1981 to 1984 for various purposes including the maintenance of law and order, counter-insurgency and anti-terrorist operations.

The army, on and off, has been (and still is) involved in guerrilla wars in Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, for the past thirty years. Apparently, few bothered about killings in isolated jungles on a remote north-eastern border. But Punjab is close to Delhi and the horror of the battle of the Golden Temple could not be hidden from the press and the public. The nation was shocked. Sentimental statements by retired servicemen and lurid reports by well-meaning but ill-informed journalists added to the hysteria.

Whatever be our individual views on the competence of the BSF commando, it was obviously considered inadequate to deal with the Sikh terrorists who had taken over the Golden Temple at Amritsar. Eventually, the army commando had to be called in to do this: a task for which it is neither organised nor trained. The Indian Army has a few commando units composed of selected volunteer para-troopers who undergo special training to operate in small groups well behind the front-line so as to assist the main forces in their ground operations.

Even to maintain the elan of such a small force requires select leadership, special effort and care. Professionals are, therefore, not amused when, from time to time, they read reports that the Home Ministry is raising 'forty commando battalions specially trained to deal with terrorism.' Those who are responsible for

anti-terrorism planning are either ignorant of the specialised nature of such units and operations, or else are bluffing the public because they hope that their bluff will not be called, or they assume that if things get out of hand, then the army can be ordered to tackle messy situations.

Either way, the involved politicians and civil servants are apparently unaware of the harm which such incredible pronouncements can cause. In any case, those responsible for perpetrating such absurdities ought to be sacked as dangerous incompetents in whom no informed person can have confidence.

Terrorism is a growing challenge to all democratic governments. Therefore, significantly, all special forces have a clean chain of command working directly with the highest political headquarter with no in-between bureaucracy. There can be no doubt that India also needs a credible special force. Whether this is to be led by the BSF or the army, and be under the Home Ministry or the Defence Ministry, is quite rightly a political decision which will be taken by the government in power.

But it is equally obvious that such a force has to be organised to suit our genius, be composed of specially selected men and be rigorously trained on professional lines if it is to be efficient and serve as a credible deterrent. That is something which the Indian public quite rightly can and must demand of the government because the security of thousands of innocent prospective victims could depend on these factors. This is no more a question of politics than the selection of athletes for the Olympics. Statistics and current world trends indicate that organised terrorism is likely to increase and not diminish in the coming decade. We have been warned.

We should also appreciate that the crisis in the Punjab cannot be viewed merely as a law and order problem, with the troops called out in aid to civil power and returned to barracks when the situation is handed back to a magistrate. The

Punjab scene is a mixture of terrorism and insurgency, and as has been pointed out, there is a world of difference between the two. Withdrawing the army from the Golden Temple involved a minor security issue; but withdrawing the army from counter-insurgency operations in the Punjab is fraught with danger.

The three strands of terrorism have yet to be eliminated; and that will take blood, sweat and time. We should have no doubt that the security forces are involved in a low intensity guerrilla war. We should also have no doubt that our army is disciplined and well led; it will win this war with a minimum display of force and loss of life, but only provided the government remains resolute, security agencies are permitted to function professionally and Home and Defence Ministry bureaucrats patch up their differences and devote their attention to countering the false rumours being circulated about atrocities being committed by the security forces (common tactics adopted by all insurgents; and these are being trained and advised by experts in Pakistan).

The security forces recognise that this problem cannot be solved by muscle alone. Whilst tackling the three strands of terrorism, we must also pay heed to the socio-political causes that have given rise to this situation and take steps to meet legitimate political, economic and religious demands, thereby strengthening the hands of the moderates and isolating the extremists. But many fail to recognise that the elimination of terrorists involves a long low-intensity battle which may require the army's presence for at least one year in the first instance.

Fortunately, ninety per cent of the Sikhs, whilst taking pride in being a separate religious community, renounce terrorism and the Khalistan concept as sinister and suicidal. There could, therefore, be an early pull-out if all goes well. On the other hand, the army's involvement could be further prolonged if the security forces fail to root out this cancer. There are no short cuts to national security.

The ultimate weapon

S. K. SINHA

THE army is the ultimate weapon available to the State to enforce the nation's will. When diplomats fail to preserve the peace, the soldier has to go to war to re-establish peace. And when the civil administration fails to preserve order, the soldier is called upon to restore order. As the nation's final safeguard, the army must not fail in either circumstance.

The main task of the army is to deal with the external enemy and not internal challenges. Its primary role is to defend national sovereignty against external aggression. In its secondary role, it is required to aid the civil power when called upon to do so. Modern wars have become very complex and modern equip-

ment highly sophisticated. The army has little time to spare from preparing for its primary role to undertake tasks connected with its secondary role. And yet these secondary tasks have to be undertaken in the national interest.

However, certain guidelines connected with carrying out these tasks need to be emphasised. These should not unduly impinge upon its ability to carry out its primary role. The army should not undertake these tasks of its own volition but only when called upon to do so by the civil authorities. The latter should summon army assistance only when they are not able to cope with a situation with their not inconsiderable resources. In other words,

the use of the army in its secondary role should be more an exception than the rule. Yet, during the period 1951 to 1970, the army had to be called out in aid of the civil power on no less than 476 occasions and during the last ten years on 369 occasions.

There are different types of tasks connected with aid to the civil power. These may be divided into five categories — counter insurgency operations, restoration of law and order, maintenance of essential services, assistance during natural calamities and development tasks. Our army has been involved in each of these categories of aid.

Counter insurgency operations imply dealing with armed insurrection by the people against the State. Colonial or neo-colonial powers may get involved in such operations in a foreign country; countries like India with no expansionist designs may have to undertake such operations against a segment of their own people. Indeed, the Indian Army has been conducting counter insurgency operations for prolonged periods in Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur. And today Punjab appears to have joined them.

In his book on the *History of Warfare*, Field Marshall Montgomery brackets insurrection with war. Notwithstanding this, there are fundamental differences between war and counter insurgency operations particularly when the latter is being conducted against a segment of one's own people. Wars are fought against a State with the aim of achieving victory by force of arms and imposing the will of one State over the enemy State.

Counter insurgency operations, on the other hand, are conducted against a people who do not constitute a State in the recognised sense and the aim is to win their hearts and minds through combined political and administrative action. All armed elements of the State—the army, the para military forces and the police—should function under military command, which should have a say in the coordination of the civil administration with military operations. Yet at the apex of

the administration, authority must rest with a civilian head of the government, who should formulate policy and should not unduly interfere in military operations.

Military action need not be unduly inhibited by considerations of minimum force, although devastating use of military force as in war, should be avoided. These operations are generally long drawn out affairs. They lasted for over 30 years in Vietnam. Our own experience, though different in intensity and scenario, has been similar. We have been so involved for nearly 30 years in Nagaland and for nearly 20 years in Mizoram.

Restoration of law and order is the most common type of aid that the army provides to the civil administration. When violence erupts and is beyond the control of the police and the para military forces, army assistance is sought. The legal position is that any Magistrate can summon military assistance when he finds that public security is manifestly endangered. Normally, requests for military assistance are cleared by the State Government concerned. The civil authorities remain in full control of the administration and they request the army to carry out certain specific tasks like dispersal of unlawful assembly or enforcement of curfew and so on, which in the given circumstance, is beyond the capability of the resources available to them. While functioning in this role, the army does not come under any magistrate or State Government. It has complete freedom to carry out its task in the manner it thinks best.

However, army action has to be guided by the four principles of necessity, minimum force, impartiality and good faith. There must be a necessity for every action that the army takes. Necessity gets established when its assistance is called for but while dealing with a specific situation, no attempt should be made at any reprisal or to terrorise anyone. The principle of minimum force requires that only the barest amount of force in relation to the requirements of the situation, be used. This is something relative

and its quantum is determined by the nature of opposition that is likely to be encountered. The principle of impartiality is self-evident. It is a very important consideration governing army action during communal riots. Lastly, the principle of good faith gets automatically satisfied if the three other principles are complied with.

It is important that troops not only act correctly but are seen to be acting correctly. The opposing crowd should never be referred to as enemy, religious susceptibilities must never be hurt and the dead and injured as a result of army action must be duly attended to. It may be recalled that at Jalian-walabagh, that infamous officer, Brigadier Dyer, grossly violated all these four principles.

Maintenance of essential services implies the utilisation of technical and other manpower of the army during a strike. The law provides that the democratic right to strike by the workers be safeguarded. However, when a strike has been declared illegal and the government has by ordinance announced that a particular service, where a strike has taken place, is vital for the well-being of the community, troops can be used for running that service. While so employed, troops are required to use their technical skill or manual power and not their weapons. The police is required to deal with any resultant law and order situation. If the situation goes beyond their control, army assistance may be taken to restore order.

Assistance during calamities like floods, earthquake, drought, fire and so on is also to be provided, when required. The army, with its organised and disciplined functioning, as also its technical skill and equipment, can be of great help. The air force can also be of considerable help by dropping food-packets, rescuing marooned people and so on.

The army can also render assistance in development projects. Earlier, army engineers constructed the Godaverri barrage and more recently for our first multi-purpose scheme, the Damodar Valley Project, survey for the seven dams, clearance of

sites and laying of approach routes were carried out by the army. Ecological battalions are now being raised as part of the Territorial Army to prevent deforestation and undertake afforestation tasks. In 1962, one of our famous divisions with an enviable fighting record had been extensively used for non-military tasks like construction of accommodation. Soon after, it had to face the Chinese in NEFA. This division crumbled against Chinese onslaughts. Ever since then, there is understandable reluctance on the part of the army to undertake tasks which may adversely affect its operational preparedness.

The scope and spectrum of the army's aid to the civil power is very wide. This does not mean that the civil administration should begin to lean heavily on the army. Frequent use of the army in aid to the civil power can become counter productive. It may not only impinge upon the army's ability to carry out its primary but may even damage its apolitical traditions.

Counter insurgency operations in one's own country or restoration of law and order are distasteful tasks for a soldier as they involve operating against one's own nationals. Yet, these tasks have to be undertaken in the interest of national security. However, it is necessary that the frequency and duration of these tasks should be as little as possible. The civil government has a large police force and an ever growing para-military force. The strength of the latter is now well over half a million. Thus, through efficient management by the civil administration, occasions when the army's assistance is required should be rare. Unfortunately, army aid is being summoned far more frequently than it used to be in the British era, despite greater militarisation of the police and the phenomenal growth of the para-military forces.

The two main reasons why army assistance is called for so frequently are increasing violence in our society and the increasing politicisation of the police. This has been as a result of constant interference in the police administration by politicians and their unabashedly using the police

to serve their political and personal ends. All this has led to the demoralisation of the police and to increasing corruption in their ranks. In many places, a nexus has been established between the politician, the criminal and the police. In the circumstance, is it any wonder that our police has become so ineffective in dealing with crisis situations and the government has to fall back repeatedly upon the army to restore order?

We need to take stock of the dangers inherent in the frequent use of the army for this role. First, troops employed on these duties lose on training time and this can adversely affect their operational preparedness. In 1947, one of the factors that may have weighed with the Pakistan General Staff was the fact that at that time the Indian Army was heavily embroiled in dealing with Partition riots in North India, and Pakistan may have felt that it could conquer Kashmir with the help of tribal raiders.

Secondly, frequent use of the army in this role erodes its deterrent effect and, in the process, the army may be forced to use greater force than it would have otherwise done. It is interesting that in 1946, Field Marshal Auchinleck felt that there may be growing violence in the country and the Indian Army would be increasingly called out to combat it. He therefore decided that the army should not revert to its pre-war *khaki* uniform and continue with its olive green, which had been introduced for operations in the jungles of Burma. His rationale was that having a uniform of a different colour than the police, the soldier would be easily distinguishable and this would have a better deterrent effect. Later events were to prove the wisdom of this decision.

Thirdly, through prolonged and frequent deployment on such duties, the strong bond of discipline in the army may weaken after some time as it has done in the case of the police. Moreover, in certain circumstances, the stress and strain of such duties may even erode the loyalty of some troops. Under the strain of widespread communal violence in Punjab during the

Partition riots, the discipline of the then undivided Indian Army began to crack. The experiment of the Punjab Boundary Force comprising elements of the old undivided Indian Army including those earmarked for the new Indian Army and the new Pakistan Army, had to be given up in September 1947.

More recently, the mutiny of some Sikh troops in June 1984 was a painful reminder of what can happen if troops are used for sensitive tasks, without adequate measures taken to educate those likely to be affected. This mutiny also emphasised the need for prior steps being taken to prevent or contain such untoward incidents. Like all other mutinies, the mutiny of Sikh troops was essentially due to failure of command. However, if troops are frequently used for such tasks, the risk of such failures gets accentuated.

Lastly, troops are called in only when the civil administration has failed in carrying out its task. Frequent failures like this will erode the moral authority of the government and the soldier may begin to lose confidence or even respect for the civil authorities. It may give him wrong ideas and a feeling that only the army can keep the civil administration going. He may even be tempted to take over the administration. Such a development will destroy the apolitical complexion of the army, which we cherish so dearly, as also destroy our democratic polity.

The Indian Army is the only apolitical army of the Third World and has been an island of discipline in a growing sea of indiscipline. It has repeatedly proved itself a great asset to the nation. Today, all our institutions are being systematically eroded and mutilated by the forces of evil, like political manipulations, unabashed sycophancy, rampant corruption and debasement of values. Our army is one of the very few institutions which has relatively been much less affected. Let us not through its frequent and prolonged use in maintenance of law and order, damage its high professional standard and its deep apolitical roots.

The security mix-up

JASWANT SINGH

TO any objective observer of our current law and order situation, two aspects stand out with marked distinction. Firstly, there is an apparent calm in the land following an orgy of violence in the preceding 3 years or so. This is akin to 'post-riot fatigue', with which phenomenon most thoughtful sociologists and policemen are familiar. The situation is

disquieting precisely because it is so misleading, an appearance of normalcy beguilingly disguising the real discontent. The other, (secondly), relates to the mixing up of roles of our various security and law and order agencies and would be a farce if it were not so potentially tragic. Our military, largely the army, has ended up by becoming partly a

police force and partly the para-military, (it has now been in the Punjab as the law and order agency for the last nine months); our various para-military organisations have been reduced to almost total policing functions and our police forces, from being guardians of order in society, have become instruments for an erosion of the rule of law in the land.

Three separate commissions of enquiry, motivated entirely by altruistic civic concern, to which Indians of distinction contributed their time, effort and ability, have all spoken passionately about police failure in the period Oct 31-Nov 4, 1984. The government has, until now, responded by suggesting that an investigation into that crime will not benefit the victims of it. On the strength of this perverse logic, the guilty continue not just to be free but to perpetuate criminality in the land.

Along with all this, and as if not content with all the militarisation of the land that has already taken place, the government has on the anvil the raising of yet another para-military organisation, the National Security Guard. This force has been launched even while an inconclusive debate about its precise role, functions and organisation is continuing with vigorous exchange of notings on files. As for the army, reluctantly it continues to perform its thankless 'policing' of the Punjab, in the consequence suffering incalculable harm to its combat effectiveness.

The period 1982-84, will for long be identified with Assam, Punjab and the late Prime Minister's assassination. It will also be remembered for being a period of large scale break-down of law and order, of police becoming agents of crime, (Bihar blindings, Delhi riots, Assam elections, Punjab terrorism, Bhiwandī burnings and the latest, Raja Man Singh's murder). Whenever the police failed in their functions, para-military forces were employed, on a large scale, to staunch the haemorrhage. When they too failed we witnessed an increasing employment of the army as a last minute measure born of desperation. Harmandir Sahib had to be entered

into in a situation as near a military operation as has been witnessed in aid to civil authority.

This catalogue of failures, both conceptual and implemental, is very long. Primarily, what it does is to inform us that the role and employment of these three organs of State has become not only increasingly confused but also that their effectiveness has come to be questioned as never before. In the process we have devalued their standing in the public eye and damaged, very considerably, their efficiency in their respective traditional roles. It is in such a milieu that we examine our police, para-military and the military.

The police and the CRPF revolts in the 70s resulted in the setting up of a Police Commission towards the end of that decade. This body, with admirable despatch, addressed itself to the problems of police forces in India and came up with eight volumes of tightly packed findings containing very substantial and long overdue recommendations. That nothing got done we all know. What is more disturbing, however, is the near certain knowledge that nothing will get done, that the labours of so many eminent Indians would have been wasted and that, despite its presentation to the government some years ago, the report will continue to collect dust, unread, on the shelves of public libraries.

It is futile attempting to fathom why the government does not act, though some do suggest that petty prejudice is all that stands in its way, because in all the 8 volumes there is, at one place, a passing reference to the late, lamented Shah Commission. I, on the other hand, am quite often struck by the thought that the government does not feel the need to act because it actually does not have to.

Recourse to the ad-hoc is by now routine, militarisation of 'law and order' functions is now treated with casual irresponsibility, the police is by now so demoralised and rendered ineffective that the easiest course is always to send for more arms.

Following the grave intelligence and security lapses which resulted

in the late Prime Minister being assassinated in her own home, by her own security guards, an idea got thrown up that what was needed was yet another organisation. Failure of the existing is best remedied by investing in more of the same, or so the argument seemed to run. As no other nomenclature was handy and as 'national security' is a pretty sacrosanct concept, this force was given the resounding title of 'National Security Guard'.

Which nation's security do the other forces guard is not as irreverent an enquiry as a first reading might suggest. Nobody is then clear as to what this National Security Guard will do. One thing, however, is patent. It is to be yet another para-military force with a kind of a mixed, catch-all, role to include anti-terrorism, anti-hijacking, VIP security, etc.

About this last, VIP guarding, at the time of writing, there appears to have been some more re-thinking and for this specific purpose, the IB is now believed to be fast completing its raising of yet another special force. Why do we keep on multiplying forces? Free from the discipline of planning, the States of the Union and the Federal Government, in a seeming frenzy of irresponsible ad-hocism, have been multiplying them at a great rate. We appear to have come a full circle from those early years, (1965, when the B.S.F. was raised), to now wanting a different force to combat every different manifestation of the malaise that has been with us for long.

It does not do any good to avoid the embarrassing debate of why a free and democratic India needs so many para-military forces when the Imperial British could do without them. Any way, let us look at some of them, if for no other reason than to at least establish whether we now have enough and whether we employ all of them for the originally intended purposes.

Firstly, there are those forces which were raised on the initiative of the Defence Services themselves and which are, theoretically, to serve the purpose of augmenting the

defensive capabilities of the Services. To perform such garrison duties as are not within the immediate charter of the Services; to provide policing of the borders both against foreign elements as also against activities like smuggling, thereby releasing troops; to act as a kind of a diplomatic buffer in times of awkward border incidents; to be available as a counter-insurgency force and only lastly to assist civil authorities in times of grave public disorder. Against their assigned tasks, where have we most employed such forces in the last three years or so? In aid to civil authority. Let us, therefore, look a bit more closely at some of them.

The Border Security Force was essentially the brainchild of the late Gen. J.N. Chaudhuri. The 1965 war with Pakistan emphasised the need for a force which could take avoidable load off the army's back. The initiative came from the army and the nucleus was provided by some existing State Armed Police Battalions. An independent organisation abbreviated called the BSF, came into being. A complex reasoning placed the force as a part of the Ministry of Home Affairs, even though its very conception was owed to the needs of Defence. The recruitment policy was equally complicated. In a force which was primarily to be military in nature, all top echelons of leadership were provided by the police which, we presume, is essentially a law and order body.

Inevitably, in time, from being a complementary force, it acquired a discernible competitive colouring. But about this schizophrenic split in personality and the resultant consequences, later. In 20 years of its life, this force has more than trebled in strength; from around 25 battalions at the time of inception to over 80 battalions now. This was partly the result of some dynamic leadership and lobbying for this force by IGs like Rustamji and Ashwini Kumar, and partly by design.

The oldest of para-military forces are the Assam Rifles, which, starting as Cachar Levies, have, since around 1917, acquired their present name. An admirable force entirely officered

by the army, which performs its difficult task with a quiet efficiency and because we do not hear of it, we do not think about it. In effect, however, what separates its functions from those of the BSF?

We could even consider the Border Roads Organisation, which force, though military in character, has more of an infrastructural role to play. Yet the single greatest difficulty that this force faces is of parentage. It is orphaned precisely because it is shared by so many; by the Ministry of Defence, of Works and Housing (CPWD), of Transport.

For that matter, take the youngest of the para-military organisations, the Coast Guard, admirable in as much as it fulfills a long felt need. But why one wonders does our Coast Guard have its headquarters in landlocked New Delhi?

The Indo-Tibet Border Police is another example of ad-hoc proliferation. Raised some time after the signing of the 1954 Trade Agreement with China, it was meant essentially to provide protection to our border outposts on the frontiers with Western Tibet. The panic of 1962, when all barrels were being scraped to the bottom, saw the transformation of this force into a different body. It is open to doubt whether there was then a transmigration of the soul as well. It hardly seems likely, what with mixing up with not so hush-hush organisations like Establishment 22, Special Frontier Force and the like. The crowing irony was when this Indo-Tibet Border Police ended up by so ingloriously failing in its responsibility of providing protection to the late Prime Minister.

A comic and yet sad paradox is that the Government of U.P. even to this day continues to have its own little micro-force, to perform exactly the same task as the I.T.B.P., in the form of the U.P. Special Police Force. Why cannot it merge with the Indo-Tibet Border Police or, for that matter, both with the BSF? Do we need it at all? What great principle of administration is involved here? It is hardly to be wondered that with all these various 'private armies' under its wing, the Home

Ministry tends to act both 'trigger happy' and 'punch drunk', simultaneously.

Then there is the Armed Police as a kind of a reserve and as a supplementing force. At least that is the theory. Unable to contend with law and order problems with the help of ordinary police organisations, various State governments have been having a jamboree of ad-hoc raising of armed police forces. It is reasonable for the Central Government to have at its disposal a central reserve of police to augment the States' resources when needed as, perhaps, also for the needs of the centrally administered territories; but, the raising of an additional armed force, (as additional police), by State governments and giving them the nomenclature 'Military Police', (as in the case of the Bihar Military Police), is both a serious grammatical error as also a grave psychological wrong.

How can the police be called military? It is both an admission of failure and the strongest possible denunciation of existing police methods and forces. Some of the border States, (like Rajasthan and its Rajasthan Armed Constabulary) could, perhaps, attempt a justification on grounds of the protection of frontiers. But then is Defence a Central or a State subject and why the same function through multiple channels and diverse, often competing, organisations? Small wonder, therefore, that RAC ends up by guarding Agartala air field and 'supervising' elections in Assam.

It is because of this confusion that the CRPF, (Central Reserve Police Force), suffers, because there is no clear definition of what it is. Is it police or is it a military organisation? It can only be one or the other. The exacting dictates of these two separate functions are such that it cannot reasonably be expected to be both, otherwise it ends up, as at present, by being neither. And that is precisely why this force is so loathed by the citizenry whenever and wherever it is employed.

Let us clearly understand that there is a police role and that there is another, which is distinctly a

military role. The two cannot be combined for long, if at all. At the root of the misemployment of our police, para-military and the military, is this basic factor. The BSF or the CRPF cannot be expected to operate like police forces if they are organised, trained and often employed as semi-military bodies. The schizophrenic split in their personality occurs here.

Policing is a function which has to be very closely identified with the people. Its basis is trust, consent, acceptance and cooperation. Police forces are law and order forces. They have to relate to the masses. As soon as a distinction is created between the people and the police, a great divide is caused to occur. A body which is for the preservation of law and order and which has acceptance and cooperation as its basic supports, cannot be expected to wage war.

War is a very different requirement. The military is trained to combat resistance, to kill so that it does not get killed. Its psyche has no place for 'cooperation'. From the moment a police force is employed as a military body, from that very moment you create a situation wherein the police may well, some day, 'wage war' against its own people. It is this ill-conceived 'militarisation' of our police that lies at the root of most of the psychological ills that afflict its body.

Conversely, implicit in the employment of the army on 'law and order' tasks, is the knowledge that the methods adopted would be coercive, not persuasive, that a military 'solution' is going to result not in order but essentially in destructive disorder and that the appearance of having 'solved' would be extremely misleading because the military would have tackled only the superficial, not the fundamental. We have arrived here, at this point of a bursting nova of a problem, because we have been confused, and continue to be so, on the conceptual aspects of the deep differences that separate the police, the para-military and the military roles.

An analysis, any analysis, has relevance in the context of a con-

flict. An examining of it becomes intelligible in that context alone. Let us, therefore, now examine some aspects of the employment of the army in the context of the situation in Punjab. It is perhaps the most confounding of all questions, this which relates to the employment of the military in Punjab.

It all starts from that one basic act of misgovernance. At a certain stage the government's response to events in Punjab became simplistically that of a 'law and order' kind. All subsequent attempts, therefore, at finding a 'solution' fell, (and continue to do so), into the inherently limited option of managing disorder by force. Why, because there are two fallacies behind such an assumption. First; as a sense of order is integral to societies, once broken it cannot be reimposed from outside and certainly not through the agency of 'force'. Second, thoughtless recourse, by any government, to its powers of coercion is a steep downhill slope on which, once skis are set, it is difficult to stop.

Recourse to force needs more of it with every subsequent application and there is then a danger of attempting short cuts, whether moved by impatience, fear or misjudgement. That is precisely what happened in Punjab in 1984. It is the synergetic consequences of that conceptual wrong that now entrap us with such obstinate immobility, in 1985, in that State.

All this calls to mind some other basic concerns. The most central is: why is the Indian State beginning to demonstrate greater and greater reliance on force as against the legitimacy of moral authority? If this is not the militarisation of the State then what is? Is not the employment of the army in aid to civil authority an admission of gross political failure? When the army frequently gets so employed and is called upon to fulfill tasks which are essentially the responsibility of agencies of law and order, what are the effects of it on the military mind? Further, when we ask of the Armed Forces to set right mistakes arising from civil misgovernance, what message are we conveying? Also how, and where, in such a situation are we to draw the

line between right and wrong, just and unjust? If agencies of the State themselves perpetrate crimes, then what is the fine dividing line between follies of the government and misdemeanours of an individual?

There are, in this precise context, two other fundamental questions that we all need to examine dispassionately. What are the duties and obligations of a citizen towards the State? Correspondingly, what are the duties and obligations of a government towards its citizens? Secondly, in a democratic milieu, in the midst of passionate, turbulent, parochial debate, how do we preserve the 'apolitical secularism' of our Armed Forces when, (a), the government does everything but destroy it and (b), when the Armed Forces themselves are no longer an insular, tightly contained little island of model virtue, free from the influence of turmoil afflicting the rest of society.

From them, (the military), and rightly so, we expect loyalty of the highest order. Loyalty to whom? To which India do we expect them to be loyal? And in the very asking of that question yet another surface — is not loyalty after all, a two way traffic? If we expect our citizens and our soldiery to be loyal to the State, how then does the State demonstrate and uphold its corresponding loyalty to them? Is it an obligation of the citizen to continue to display a mindless and thereby an emptied concept of loyalty, no matter which form of governance or what mutant of the State to which they originally subscribed, surfaces to demand allegiance?

In its most elementary form, the State and the government have to be not just passionately, unequivocally caring of the welfare of citizens and soldiery, but purposefully and demonstrably to be actually seen to be doing so. Patriotism is neither the prerogative of the ruling elite, nor is it open to partisan interpretation. Despite obvious clichés on 'patriotism being the last refuge of the scoundrel...etc.' when we, in India, reduce allegiance to the nation to the level of florid buffoonery, (witness Kar Seva, State sponsored Sarbat Khalsa, etc.) then we are placing

immense strains on our citizens and soldiers.

Here we have to, with urgent relevance to the continued employment of the army in Punjab, refresh our thinking on why soldiers fight. Whenever any member of the Armed Forces is asked upon to fulfill his duty, he does so in the knowledge that he might lose his life in the process. If despite that fore-knowledge, the soldier is still ready to 'go over the top', then what motivates him?

Arthur Koestler has some very thought provoking comments to make upon this. Amongst other things he has said that to most soldiers 'war making, and the enemy... is an abstract entity, a common denominator, a collective portrait.' He is not moved against that 'enemy' by any pent up aggressive drives which can find no other outlet. 'Soldiers fight this invisible, impersonal "enemy" not because they are motivated by any aggressive feelings towards', but by 'love and devotion for their country,... religion, cause' or just a sense of loyalty to the plain, unadorned unit of their service.

In lay terms, this 'devotional quotient' is what converts itself into the otherwise difficult-to-quantify factor of 'morale and a sense of loyalty'. 'Anybody who has served in the ranks of the Armed Forces would readily testify that, in the dreary routine that service life and waging of war ordinarily is, it is boredom, discomfort, homesickness, sex-starvation and longing for peace that dominates the thoughts of the lonely soldiers, not hatred for the invisible "enemy".'

That is precisely why devotion and loyalty to a cause resulting in morale high enough to volunteer to die for it acquires such central importance. But then, as has been said earlier, 'devotion and loyalty' is a two way traffic. To what extent can a government continue to lay claims upon this quotient, expect blind obedience and yet appear to be uncaring?

Twice, in the last four decades, we have witnessed a politicisation of this concept of 'loyalty'. The

INA, and recently one mutiny and some desertions in the Indian Army, following upon the 6 June action in the Golden Temple. The fundamental issues raised, in both instances, are about loyalty. How do we answer them? There are two levels at which they need to be examined; the immediate and the long term. The former is more easily disposed of. Soldiers that have broken their oath of allegiance and service, no matter under what misguidance, deserve to get their due under military law. Some of them mutinied and committed the most heinous of military crimes, using their weapons against their superiors; some others deserted with weapons; military law on the subject is explicit but not arbitrary.

The long term, on the other hand, being more difficult, has to start with a recognition of a collective failure, down the chain of command, from top to bottom and all those entrusted with their various spheres of responsibilities are accountable. Such an accountability covers both the political and the military hierarchy and certainly the Ministry of Defence cannot claim to be an innocent, uninvolved bystander. In military law those that have so committed a crime must be judged on the basis of their crime. Law, if it is to be tempered with justice, must then take into account an escalating failure. A recognition of this pyramid of failures would then, perhaps, give us an understanding of the larger dimensions of the whole issue.

Unless that is done, all our reactions would be pitifully short sighted and historically criminal. A State cannot be a just State if it does not understand the distinction between law and justice, leniency and clemency. A move towards the establishment of a just State and a re-acquiring of the majesty of its moral authority, cannot be made unless we recognise that the biggest impediment in our path is that of 'militarisation' of the State, which in turn is the consequence of our failure to understand and put into effect the fundamental differences that separate the role and functions of the police, the para-military and the military.

Loyalty, discipline, treachery

ROMESH THAPAR

WE can no longer count the question-marks that clutter our minds. Only simpletons are unaware of them. There is a certain inevitability in all this. When proper governance breaks down and no effort at correction is visible, when every norm and discipline is flouted by those whose duty it is to set the style, it is difficult to draw the dividing lines between concepts like treachery or loyalty, or, for that matter, conspiracy. It is a sad condition.

The maturing of this moral or ethical turbulence is the end result of a long political malignancy. It entered the tissues of the Republic in the North East where a variety of tribal aspirations were suppressed by sustained and rather brutal military operations, whatever the apologists like to say. The documentation now available is too overwhelming to allow for glib theorising.

If Tamilnadu, by chance rather than design, was persuaded by

Jawaharlal Nehru to abandon its secessionist dream, the insensitivity persisted in the handling of the Kashmiri Muslim torn by a mini-partition and, later, of the Punjab's Sikh community. These problems have been compounded by political conspiracies and treacheries sparked not exclusively by extremists and terrorists. They were nurtured in Indira Gandhi's mismanagement, in policies of divide and rule, and battered on them. Global scenarios exist to educate us.

The solution invariably sought by political bankrupts is military aid or occupation. Call it by whatever name you like, but this is the reality in Assam and the North East, in Kashmir, and in Punjab after the storming of the Golden Temple which was allowed, seemingly by design, to be desecrated and fortified over a long and tortuous eight months, particularly during the last three. And, following the assassination, and its genocidal aftermath,

the shock waves can no longer be hidden. It is incredible that anything near loyalty survives in this mess of conspiracy and treachery.

The mind of India is too old and wise to be fobbed off with simplifications of complicated political gambits. The talk of the bazaars is proof that all one-sided propaganda and theorising has little impact. The suppression of the truth, in fact, makes credibility a first victim. And an uninformed, uneducated people turn to communal anchorages.

Over the past several years, and before the military moved to save northern India, there had been 369 military involvements internally. A single knotted thread of many strands connects all these eruptions and interventions, including the present, and if it were to possess the tensile strength to suppress 700 millions it could choke the Republic.

Bhuttoism has many variations. Moreover, the military in India, unlike the officer corps in Pakistan, is not related by blood to the political elite and it has no dominant regional or ethnic group to give it powerful direction—and particularly now, when the Sikh component is unlikely to grow. It is time for us to ponder on this aspect of our future.

The crisis, in its earlier stages, found a very Indian way of making its presence felt. A note released by the distinguished and much-decorated Lt. General Harbaksh Singh (retd.) questioned the logic of treating the Sikh soldiers who were involved in armed desertion or mutiny at several points on hearing of the assault on the Golden Temple, as men who should normally face the severest sentences under military law. After all, it was argued, their oath of loyalty is to India, but also to their religious faith.

Punishment there will have to be, considering that at one place an officer was killed and at others the soldiers stole arms and equipment. If it were proven that they were recruited by priests sent out by the retired Major General Shahbeg Singh, a Bhindranwale aide, and

that they took vows administered by the terrorist centre in the Golden Temple, then an even more serious charge would come into focus. Military discipline, as it exists, has to be imposed. The guilty cannot escape their guilt.

However, the events of the past year do underline the need at concerned levels to take a good look at the frameworks of military discipline and the procedures which exist to punish those who violate it. Should we maintain rigid attitudes whatever the extra-curricular tasks assigned to the armed forces or do we attempt to find more flexible ways of dealing with unique situations? This question assumes profound relevancy in the destabilised situation of today.

The note prepared by General Harbaksh Singh, carefully worded to hide the profound traumas through which the Sikh community and its military component was passing, became the basis for a letter to the Supreme Commander, the President of India, by several senior retired Sikh commanders. Their names are well-known in military circles and they possess outstanding records. A failure to discuss fully the matters raised by them, and embracing the new crises, could cause wider alienation.

After all, if the President of India, a Sikh, feels that he must answer the facile charges levelled at him from the Akal Takht by priests who never found the courage to challenge the terrorist killer gangs of Bhindranwale — and he is the nominal 'Supreme Commander' — is it logical to demand very special behaviour patterns from ordinary soldiers pledged to defend their country and their faith?

We cannot drift in this fashion. We have to find anchors for the many challenges now taking shape in our sub-continent. The crisis of the Sikhs is so grave that it is going to re-open many issues which we thought were generally agreed upon and settled. Make no mistake about this.

The emotions that have come into play affect eleven per cent of

the Indian military establishment — that is, 120,000 men. And there are four times that number scattered in the countryside as ex-servicemen, respected among the Jat Sikhs who inhabit a border State and who pioneered the green revolution against famine and shortage. This is apart from the Sikh component of the officer corps — 22 per cent, and central to the viability of the armed forces.

In this connection, Lt. General M.L. Thapan writing recently in *The Statesman* makes some very pertinent observations:

...the incidents of mutiny and armed desertion, which occurred after the army's entry into the Golden Temple, have led to calls from various quarters for a fresh look at the class composition of the army and to internal reorganisation. It is the same old story of identifying whole communities with the actions of a misguided few. Despite our advances in education and technology, the tribal instinct in India is very strong. It has its advantages, too, as the army has learnt from being bloodied in battle over the years. Homogeneity and cohesion are vital when shot and shell decimate the army's ranks; at such moments men are rallied easily if their tribal instincts are appealed to. Hence the origin of famous war cries: 'Ayo Gorkhali' of the Gorkhas; 'Chhatrapati Maharaj Ki Jai' of the Marathas, 'Bajrang Bali Ki Jai' of the Rajputs and 'Bole Sau Nihal, Sat Sri Akal' of the Sikhs, to name a few. Reducing the infantryman and his unit to a mere numeral does not evoke the same response.

About a quarter of a century ago, because of acts of collective indiscipline, a battalion of the Assam Regiment was disbanded — in unseemly haste, as it transpired later. On subsequent investigation, this indiscipline was found to be the direct outcome of the poorest possible leadership and man-management. Several of the men who were then discharged found their way into the Naga underground.

Though the battalion was revived some years later, the damage had been done, and a proud reputation needlessly sullied.

A caveat, therefore, needs to be addressed to those in whose hands the destiny of our army lies. Do not act in pique or in haste, sacrifice tradition for expediency or allow political inclination to damage the army's delicate fabric. 'The army is not like a limited liability company to be reconstructed from time to time as the money market fluctuates. It is not an inanimate thing like a house, to be pulled down or enlarged or structurally altered at the caprice of the tenant or owner. It is a living thing. If it is bullied it sulks; if it is unhappy it pines; if it is harried it gets feverish; if it is sufficiently disturbed it will wither and dwindle and almost die; and when it comes to this last serious condition; it is only revived by lots of time and lots of money.' These words were written by no less a person than Sir Winston Churchill. The disappearance of the Sikh Regiment, as at present constituted, from the Order of Battle of the Indian Army would be a major tragedy.

The basic questions that emerge are whether a soldier who is pledged to defend his land from external aggression should be ordered to take part in an assault on his places of worship, and whether such an undertaking can only be on a voluntary level. Additionally, and unexpressed so far in this questioning, is the old doubt of whether a soldier asked to take part in war operations against a neighbouring enemy which includes his relations should be excused or given the right to perform a less active task.

Our experience teaches us that these cases will be few and far between, but with the background of the assault on the Sikh communities and the marked tendency to isolate the Sikh component of the armed forces, the questioning assumes new dimensions. In fact, it has become critical to the future of the armed forces.

Blimps of various description, and the blatantly amoral politicians who peddle patriotism, will go into paroxysms of rage on references to military sensitivities. They live in cocoons of their own making and have yet to realise that extraordinary transformations are taking place in the thinking of people round the world. Governments are being compelled to take note of these changes in attitude to 'loyalty' and 'discipline', to 'conspiracy' — yes, even in military machines.

I was on the other side of the world when the guns opened up on the Golden Temple. The stupid stress on Sikh commanders 'leading the assault' and the specific mention of a Muslim officer heading the 'commandos' was terribly distressing. Even under the umbrella of a superficial secularism, such distinctions are nauseating. I assuaged my feelings with the convenient rationalisation offered by a friend that they must have volunteered to do the job of cleansing the Golden Temple.

And, then, came the news of the mutineers — a clear indication that the Sikh soldiers had not been prepared for something that was on the political military agenda for several months. This grave and unforgivable lapse on the part of the military staff, and the regimental commanders, was not highlighted by the more thoughtful in our country. As always, the reporting took a *cliche* view of conspiracy and treachery, even implying in a very vague sort of way that from now on every Sikh in uniform should be suspect — and, by God, after the assassination that was so.

The military machine is taught to kill or be killed. It is not a police force under numerous scrutinies and inhibitions. And, yet, there was no attempt to work out alternative scenarios to avoid, after Bhindranwale's armed intrusion, a second desecration of the Golden Temple or to raise volunteers for a job that would be bloody and destructive at whatever level it was attempted. What is more, there was a total failure to publicly debate the implications of fortifying the great shrine of the Sikhs and exposing it to destruction — a blatant violation of religious instructions.

We are always obsessed with assessments after the event. No one really demands the work-outs on the alternatives that were possible. Inefficiencies distort understanding. We now have to wait for the full story of the goings-on in the PM's security system to understand that the challenge is beyond police minds. Or will we go on drifting?

At another level, mandatory inhibitions on the use of the various arms of State power are doubly necessary in the absence of strict disciplines governing the management and use of places of worship and their neighbourhoods. One evil leads to another. This is to be expected. The neglect of these inter-related questions is phenomenal. Where thought has been expended, it has been piecemeal, isolated, unrelated to the totality of the problem.

It is ironic that Hindu activists, who build their communal passions on historical accounts of the 'looting' and 'sacking' of their temples and monuments, should be largely insensitive to the destruction caused by their armed forces in mosques and gurdwaras, particularly the Golden Temple at Amritsar, which for the Sikh community is the very heart of their religion, made so by the founders of their young faith.

The Hindu, in these days of terrorist politics, should contemplate scenarios which include possible assaults on shrines when violated, like Tirupathi in Andhra Pradesh, or Jagannath in Orissa, or the Meenakshi Temple in Tamilnadu, or Padmanabhaswami Temple in Kerala, or Vaishno Devi in Jammu, or Nathdwara in Rajasthan.

These matters have to be raised with a certain sharpness if only to highlight the notions of political conspiracy and treachery against which professional loyalty is sought to be discussed. After all, if the military becomes more and more embroiled in preserving internal peace, it is possible that soldiers rushed to a particular area will refuse to shoot down their own people. Only the stupid can imagine that discipline is discipline. In 1857, the grease on a bullet almost broke the British power.

I cannot help recalling the 1965 war with Pakistan, during which the same Lt. General Harbaksh Singh refused to accept an order from Army Chief Chaudhuri that he withdraw to 'the line of the Beas' as ordered by the Cabinet presided over by Prime Minister Shastri (a refusal which led that night to the virtual elimination of a large part of Pakistan's Patton tank strength). At that time, Indira Gandhi in a radio talk attempted to counter communal currents by inserting rather courageously a sentence about the feelings of our Muslim brethren involved in a war against close relations. How different are our cogitations today? I cannot help wondering what I would do if pitted against a brother or sister, the theoretical lessons of the *Gita* notwithstanding.

If we are on the edge of using the military machine frequently to pursue this or that *internal* political scenario, then I am afraid it would be farcical to arraign soldiers as mutineers and rebels if they are incensed by assaults on their places of worship. The frameworks of military discipline have to change. Soldiers can be dismissed, denied pensions, punished under the law for any other crime, including murder, but when military forces are used internally, a rigid application of military law will not hold. We need to study practice elsewhere. There must be relevant answers available.

If the military machine is to be kept strictly isolated from the internal situation, except for some grave, debilitating crisis where such isolation is not feasible, we must begin to discuss how certain susceptibilities resulting from warring within our partitioned sub-continent should be managed. We are entering an era of considerable enlightenment in our world, and it is absurd to build policies and postures on out-dated feudal notions — for, that is what they are. Test conspiracy, loyalty and treachery and you will find them many-sided and very tangled in myth and legend.

I have that awful feeling that the rather limited political leadership of India will see the solution of the

problem in so-called mixed formations, at this point of heightened emotions and also in reducing the Sikh percentage in the armed forces to reflect its less than two per cent share of the population. This kind of shallow manoeuvring can be more damaging to the security of this country than the so-called conscientious objectors. History teaches that border populations, and the soldiery drawn from them, are the best guarantee of security. Military establishments cannot ignore that fact and make population percentages the only criterion of recruitment for a sprawling and complex land mass.

The earlier reference to norms, standards and probity is the starting point for a correction at any level. If we continue as at present, the scene will become murkier and murkier. We know how widely police formations have been used to harass anyone, including those on the wrong side of the political fence. Homes are raided. False charges are registered. A mockery is made of the law. We now know the consequences. This lawlessness by the guardians of the law has to be halted by a vigilant citizenry acting through a vigilant judiciary. Are we to remain silent on the military and para-military scenarios?

Politically, instead of debating irrelevant issues, we should be employing our talents to establish working checks on the misuse of the various arms of the State. It is a grey area of lawful and unlawful orders. Jaya Prakash Narayan was exercised precisely over this question. Should not the police commanders have the right to refuse to be ordered into illegalities? Should not military and para-military commanders have the right to insist on critical conditions being fulfilled before being committed to internal confrontations? It all needs discussing, even demolishing, if necessary.

In other words, should any task beyond the strict definition of duty be resisted — and should commanders have the right to act only in the performance of this duty? These are tough propositions in our present state of moral confusion, but they have to be met. We need to strengthen the backbone of those

who actually wield power, civil and military.

The heavy tampering with the poorly paid police force, despite mutinies, still actively encouraged by megalomaniac rulers and by the casteist elements who have entered politics, together with the 'packing' of a variety of para-military formations with half-educated, hoodlum and lumpen elements from town and village, are compelling the manipulators of power to turn increasingly to the military for support and suppression. Along this path lies disaster.

Soon, we will find the military reduced to a rabble like the rest of the armed constabularies. Let the chieftains of our Intelligence agencies, who are today making themselves the shadowy presences in the corridors of power, take note. After all, they are unfortunately drawn only from these forces and, alas, from the culture they spark.

And, finally, it is worth a certain emphasis that an extremely dangerous aspect of using the military and para-military establishments wherever internal political management breaks down is that it engenders hostile feelings to forces that should enjoy the unstinted support of the population, irrespective of politics and its divisiveness. Any survey of border areas in Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Punjab and Kashmir would prove more than disturbing.

As for Punjab today, the situation is unnerving. Our border security is psychologically damaged and needs priority attention. We should not be misled by our pathetic dependence on the military, following the police collapse in the North engineered by the ruling party after Indira Gandhi's assassination.

A national debate must be joined around these issues. If a minimum disciplining of the politician's play with the military and para-military establishment can be achieved, a major correction will have been achieved. Other connected questions raised in this article can follow later when logical thinking is liberated from emotional currents.

Books

ASSAM: The Difficult Years by T.S. Murty. New Delhi, Himalaya, 1983.

ASSAM: A Valley Divided by Shekhar Gupta. New Delhi, Vikas, 1984.

THE UPHEAVAL YEARS IN NORTH EAST INDIA by Saroj Chakravarty. Calcutta, 1984.

THE North East is no longer a little known area. The national press has something or other to say about it every day. The number of serious monographs on the region coming out during the last 3-4 years is more than what has appeared during the previous two decades. *Difficult Years* by Murty, another by Shekhar Gupta and the *Upheaval Years* by Chakravarty are all major works. Each in its own way is a serious contribution to studies on the region. The first two deal entirely with Assam, while Chakravarty wants to deal with the whole of North East India, but also ends up writing mostly about the Brahmaputra valley.

Murty's book is the lengthiest of the three. A Nehru Fellow, the author says that he will present the facts and allow the reader to draw his own conclusions. Along with this, he suggests that the solution will have to be an imposed one; on Assam by the Centre: with shifting of such Bengalis as cannot be retained in Assam to other provinces in India. The argument seems to be that, if India can absorb the much larger numbers involved in the Partition, it should be possible to take on the Bengalis not wanted in Assam. This is accompanied by a warning that what is done with regard to Assam will have repercussions on the problem of immigrants from Ceylon, Nepal, Burma and East Africa.

Shekhar Gupta's is a more ambitious attempt. A distinguished journalist and probably the best of those who were reporting during 1983 on Assam, he goes behind the scenes and attempts a 'secret' (my phrase, not Gupta's) history of the events leading to the 1983 February elections. Gupta feels that facts and data have been suppressed. The State Government deliberately, and the Union Government perhaps deliberately, gave a wrong picture of the situation obtaining in the State before and during the election period. The author is highly

critical of the handling of the riots by the Assam Government. The additional data he gives is valuable, though 'secret' histories can never claim they have all the facts.

Assuming that what Gupta says happened has happened, one still has questions to ask. A large majority of the Assamese obviously did not want an election, while a substantial minority wanted it. Faced with the necessity of a constitutional amendment and the assurances held out by the State Government that elections were possible, the Union Government and the Election Commission went ahead. This was an error of judgement: very serious, but nevertheless an error of judgement. The alternative was either to postpone elections for an indefinite period, or obtain agreement with the agitation leadership by various concessions.

The situation in January 1983 was such that concessions to the agitation leadership, which would not create further problems later on, seemed impossible to the Union Government. The author seems to imply that a solution was possible and in any case the government should have gone in for a constitutional amendment postponing the elections. The last was theoretically possible. But, it must be accepted that many felt genuinely and honestly that it would set a precedent which could have become very dangerous.

Chakravarty is a civil servant who has had access to unpublished records in the West Bengal secretariat. While attempting to cover the North East region as a whole, he really deals with Assam only. What he has brought out can be accepted as authentic. This is probably so with regard to the role played by Dr. B.C. Roy during the language disturbances. After completing the book, however, one gets the impression that the problem is really one of Assamese intransigence. It is the Bengali speaking people, and more so the refugees, who have been adopting a cooperative attitude. This is a suggestion difficult to accept.

The North East is a region where we have had, and are having, movements for independence, movements for autonomy, movements for greater delegation of powers and of course for drastic changes to the borders of each State and each Union Territory. The only exception is Arunachal which has been trouble free until now; with Meghalaya coming a

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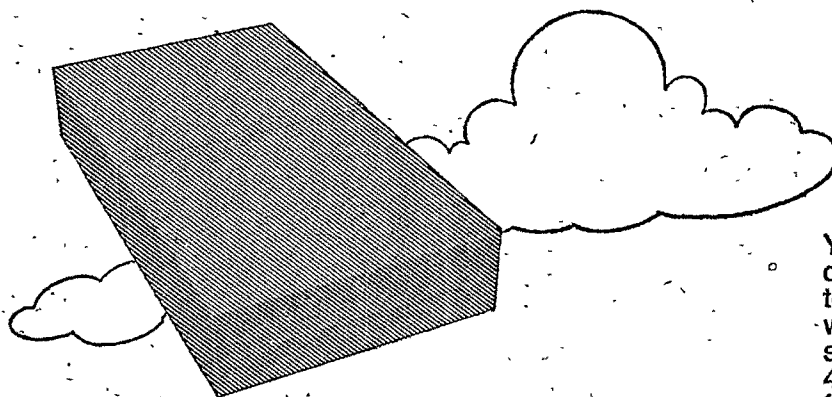
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close second. Immediately after Independence, the Khasis took the lead in asking for a composite hill State for North East India; but ultimately reconciled themselves to a hill State comprising the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo.

Of the other units in the region, Manipur started the post-Independence era with a communist revolt that covered the tribal as well as plains areas. The Meitei extremists' movements of the late 60s and from 1979 onwards, on the other hand, have been restricted to the Imphal valley. The Meitei have received little or no support from the Nagas in the north or Kuki in the southern part. At the same time, the desire of the Nagas of Manipur to merge in Nagaland has only become muted and not disappeared. The Kuki's link with Mizoram is not being talked about now, except by the MNF in Mizoram itself.

In Tripura, then, there was communist insurgency immediately after Independence, and tribal revolts in the early 70s and again in the early 80s. Neither in Manipur nor in Tripura did the communist revolt's leaders want to get out of India. The Meitei extremist movement in Manipur and the hostile tribal movements in Tripura, on the other hand, specifically stood for secession and independence. The major parties in the two States, Congress and the MPP in Manipur as well as the CPM and Congress in Tripura—all with a mass following—have opposed both the Meitei and tribal revolts.

In Nagaland, the initial demand was for independence, changing to a bid for Union Territory status in 1961, and to statehood in 1963. 1975 brought the bulk of the hostiles overground. At the same time, Phizo is still in the U.K. and still talking of independence; while Muiva is staying on in Burma and still conducting occasional terrorist raids. Whether or not he subscribes to the leadership of Phizo, Muiva definitely wants independence. In Mizoram, the first decade and a half was dominated by the nationalists. The MNF and Laldenga who broke new ground in 1963 have agreed to a settlement within the Indian Union since 1975; but peace has yet to come to Mizoram. If Laldenga is to be believed, he will now be content with what Sailo and Lalthanwala demand; statehood.

Assam has the problem of the anti-foreigners' movement. There have been formulae galore to solve it, though there is agreement on none. The Assamese speaking people so as the Bengalis, stay squarely with the concept of being a part of India and swear by the Indian Constitution. The lunatic fringe in Assam has, on a few occasions, adopted an anti-national stance. This has, however, been repudiated by everybody who has any following in the State. Apart from the anti-foreign nationalists, Assam is plagued by the demands voiced from time to time for a separate Union Territory for the plains tribals, another for the Ahom-Thai, a third for Cachar, etc. They, however, seem to be only temporary aberrations.

How do we deal with a region like this? Neither the sub-nationality theory nor the minor cultural group concept can fully explain what is happening east of Siliguri. There is some necessity for assertion of group identity. There is also the question of future shock. More important is the dissatisfaction with the failure to bring about the utopia of one's own brand, after achievement of statehood/Union Territory status, autonomous district councils, inner line restrictions, etc. The economic solution has been tried out. What has been achieved by the pumping in of funds vastly in excess of any other region in the country, is not much if we are to go by the situation now, in late 1984.

Probably, the problems of North East India will be solved only after we stop treating North East India as a problem region, and instead look upon it as a territory with several problems, each having its own special characteristic. One thing is clear. Wherever there is insurgency, it has to be put down and whenever law and order is distributed, they have to be restored. But, these are limited objectives. The real task is the integration of North East India with the rest of the country—first of all, emotionally. For that, the rest of India has to know much more about the North East. In fact, the necessity for it is even greater than the North East learning more about the rest of the country. No real solution is possible without our understanding what has gone on and what is going on. For this reason, if nothing else, the three books which came out in 1980-84 should be on the shelf of every library.

R.N. Duggal

THE PUNJAB STORY by Amarjit Kaur, Arun

Shourie, Lt. Gen. J.S. Aurora, Khushwant Singh, M.V. Kamath, Shekhar Gupta, Subhash Kirpekar, Sunil Sethi, Tavleen Singh. Delhi, Roli Books International, 1984.

TRAGEDY OF PUNJAB: Operation Bluestar and

After by Kuldip Nayar and Khushwant Singh. Delhi, Vision Books, 1984.

TO STAND apart and then assess the unfolding of events which slip into the history of a nation is difficult.

One such event was Operation Bluestar, the three-day battle fought from June 5, 1984 between the Indian Army and armed Sikh extremists within the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar. It marked the end of an era in Sikh-Hindu relations, catapulted the Sikh community into the complex regions of identity-definitions and later provoked a series of response from the majority community which culminated in pogroms against the Sikhs after the assassination of the former Indian Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on October 31, the same year.

Then there are the central figures in such events, figures whose lives become the stuff of legends. In Punjab, the most prominent was Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who became the focal point of Sikh extremism from 1982 onwards and whose death during Operation Bluestar made him the newest martyr for his community.

One can understand, then, the total absorption of all the writers of both these books with such an event and such a figure. Here lies the limitations and worth of such writings.

Both books are, at best, a chronicle of events of the last year. *The Punjab Story* is a collection of some of the most detailed and occasionally first-hand accounts of Operation Bluestar itself. Four journalists, who were in Amritsar at the time, have put down their observations of this military operation about which the Indian Government has yet to supply accurate and consistent figures of casualties suffered by both sides and details of the battle itself. It is important, therefore, to place on record as much information as could be ferreted of the operation.

Equally important is the documentation of interviews with Sant Bhindranwale as it aids the process of understanding the various forces which brought such a person into the national scene and led him into taking the positions he did within his community and before the world.

But, like the proverbial moth-flame syndrome, the fascination of most of these writers with the Sant and the events leading to and following Operation Bluestar have left unexplored the genesis of the rise of one and the occurrences of the latter.

Recounting Sikh history from a socio-political perspective, as Khushwant Singh has done in *The Tragedy of Punjab*, and his detailed record of the talks between the Akali Dal and the former Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, is necessary and instructive. It reveals the utter bankruptcy of political theory as well as strategy within both these groups. The paucity of content in these discussions, as reported by Singh, shows how superficial was the understanding of the dynamics of Punjabi society by the Akali Dal and the leaders in Delhi. Demands seem solely to be based on a 'we have been neglected' whine.

Their reportage gives no information of whether both sides comprehended why such demands should have re-surfaced at this specific point of time. Nor does either side seem to have any understanding of the functioning of a federal polity, of formulating positions for interaction after periods of imbalanced growth between the concerned State and the rest of the country on the one hand, and between neighbouring States on the other, all within the context of shifting political realities. Nor do the writers themselves provide their own interpretations, within these parameters, in the book itself.

But, above all, what one misses in both these books is some analysis of the interaction of historical forces with the processes ignited by modern development policies in Punjab.

Take the Sikh youth. Visit Mehta Chowk and the area around the Dumdumi Taksal, where Sant Bhindranwale began his career as a preacher. Ask the people living there of the reasons why he drew such vast crowds. They will tell you that he won their adoration because he helped scores of young people find a new meaning to life, weaned them away from drugs and alcohol and stressed rigid moral values for living.

Later, when he became a political figure and held audience with people from across the country on the rooftop of the Guru Nanak Nivas, within the Golden Temple, it was the male Sikh youth who formed his closest circle and his bodyguards. Similarly, in the villages outside the cities of Punjab, it was the young male farmer who made the most strident noises about Khalistan.

Yet, to date, I know of no recent attempt to analyse why the young Sikh male responded so fervently to a strictly religious leader and his message. Merely to talk of unemployment and the negative fall outs of the Green Revolution, just is not enough. What is needed are detailed studies of the impact on Sikhs and Hindus of the diverse forces of modern development programmes, of raised incomes and expectations on what is, in the case of the Sikhs, an essentially homogenous, traditional agricultural community, within the framework of an active religion in the form of Sikhism; of the destabilisation caused by the unequal distribution of wealth within the State where the minority-majority ratio is the inverse of what it is in the rest of the country.

Even while chronicling recent events, none of the writers have attempted to describe the extent to which the Central Government had allowed the local administration and the law enforcing machinery in Punjab to degenerate in the months before Operation Bluestar. Or the parallel government which functioned from within the Golden Temple.

Merely looking at the police force would provide valuable evidence. At the time when the army moved into Amritsar, the police force in Punjab was demoralised to an extent unbelievable even by regular Indian standards. Matters had worsened since the induction of the Central Reserve Police into the State three years ago. So frequent were the complaints of communalisation that the Punjab police had come to be identified with the Sikhs and the CRP with the Hindus.

The police themselves tell a different story. Senior police officials who we met in Chandigarh, immediately after Operation Bluestar, said that the communalisation of the police force started 15 years ago

when Zail Singh was Chief Minister. At that period, a large number of Sikh police officers changed their cadre and were transferred to Punjab, deliberately creating an imbalance in the force.

In the last two years, however, police efficiency was further undercut by nothing less than stark fear — of elimination by Sant Bhindranwale and his men, should his law be questioned.

Most police stations had two telephone lines — one a direct line to the Golden Temple. Orders coming from there had to be immediately answered. Police officers, ordinary constables and senior men, spoke with obvious lingering terror of their condition during those times. For, they said, there was no authority within the State to protect them against the wrath of Sant Bhindranwale, should they earn it in any way.

'If you eliminated one terrorist, you had an entire organisation behind you to eliminate your relatives,' said a senior police Sikh officer of the State vigilance department.

Numerous police officers complained that the government took no action against the terrorists when complaints were filed. Instead, the local police in Amritsar had orders not to fire in the direction of the Golden Temple. When DIG Atwal was shot dead at the Golden Temple and his assailant was seen to enter the Golden Temple, policemen were forbidden to enter or remove the bleeding body of their chief until an hour later, when instructions arrived allegedly from within the Golden Temple, to do so.

Instead, the authorities of the State resorted to the transfer of senior police officials frequently — Amritsar alone had four Superintendents of Police transferred between November 1983 and June 1984.

Factionalism between the then Union Home Minister, Zail Singh, and the Punjab Chief Minister, Darbara Singh, working at cross purposes further immobilised police work — for instance, when Sant Bhindranwale was arrested at Mehta Chowk in 1981, at the instance of Darbara Singh, he was released on orders from 'people in Delhi.'

What reply does the Indian Government have for this record of political manipulateness within Punjab?

Land and labour disputes and even marriages were being settled by the Sant from within the Golden Temple. Offices of the labour conciliation bureau were empty most of the time as the Sant and particularly Bhai Amrik Singh wielded more power within unions and with managements than any government official. Wives of local journalists would wait anxiously for their husband's return when the latter went within the Golden Temple as there was no knowing what reactions would greet them on their latest press reports.

Instead, the government made a series of desperate attempts to justify what was finally its brutal display of armaments and power against a minority community — the destruction of sections of the Golden Temple by tanks and guns operated by Indians against a section of Indians.

We are expected to believe that the government had no idea of the extent of armaments within the Golden Temple and, anyway, we are told, whatever came was supplied by 'interested' foreign powers.

This is one of the many myths which none of the writers in either books attempt to explode. For, neither of these government claims can stand the test of investigation.

Senior officers within the Border Security Force categorically stated that not more than 10 per cent of the arms came from Pakistan. Most were acquired from within the country through pilferage from arms depots and in cross-country transit or by smuggling, a fairly common feature at every BSF 'Naka' scattered across the 500 km. long meandering border with Pakistan. Most of the smugglers were known to have been financed and controlled by local politicians.

And, according to P.S. Bhinder, former Inspector General of Police, one of the larger smugglers, Kuldip Singh Kolha, stayed in the Golden Temple for two years. The All-India Sikh Student Federation General Secretary, Harminder Singh Sandhu, who surrendered to the army during the Golden Temple battle, had allegedly clear links with the smugglers.

According to him, 'Intelligence information reached the places it should have reached. It was a political failure.'

A.S. Pooni, former Home Secretary of Punjab added that the government had a fair idea of the kind of weapons within the Golden Temple. Senior officials categorically stated that the CID gave the government detailed information about the exact nature of the weaponry in the possession of the extremists. VIPs who visited the Temple were shown the fortifications — the slits made in the walls of the Akal Takht and the sandbags along the upper portions of the Temple.

These are fundamental issues which must be debated and for which answers and accountability must be demanded. As dangerous as Mrs. Gandhi's frequent strategy of isolating moderates within any movement or opposition party is the complicity of the Central Government in the game of reducing an entire State and its machinery to a point of inefficiency and ineptitude which, in this particular instance, has caused irreparable damage to one community and deepened the rift between it and the majority within the country.

Shahnaz Auklesaria

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218	The Police	October 1977
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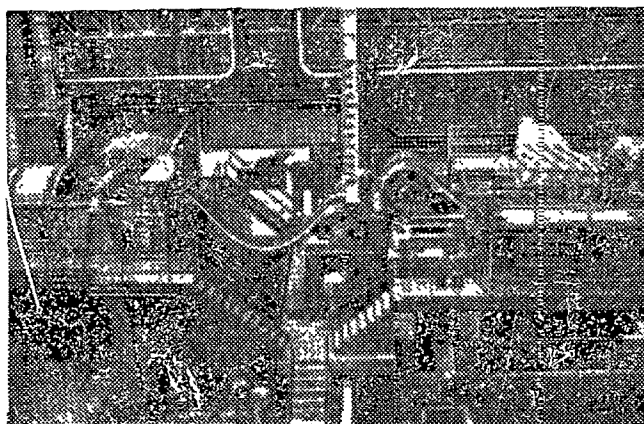
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|| SEMINAR || attempts a departure from the usual journal. Problems, national and international, are posed and discussed. Each issue deals with a single problem. Those who hold different and at times opposing view-points express their thoughts. There is no editorial, no summing up. Readers are free to judge the facts for themselves. It may not be possible to provide a final answer to questions raised, but || SEMINAR || equips its readers to find their own answers.

SEMIANAL

309

May 1985

THE EDGES OF BEAUTY

THE FACES OF REALITY

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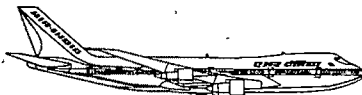
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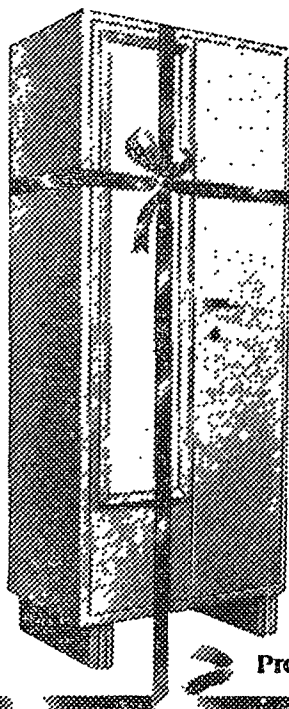
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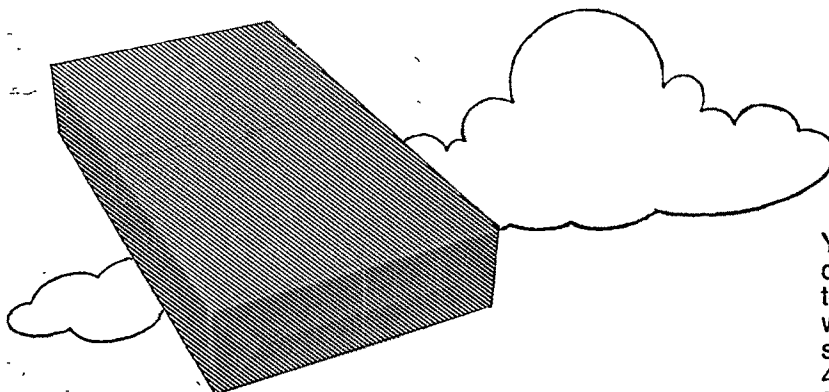
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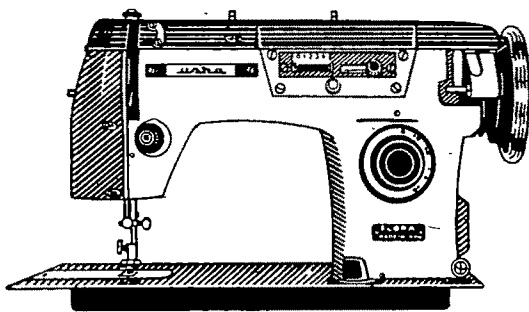
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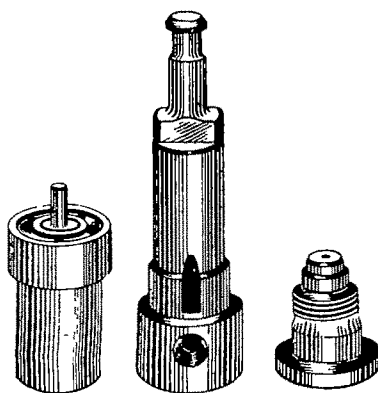
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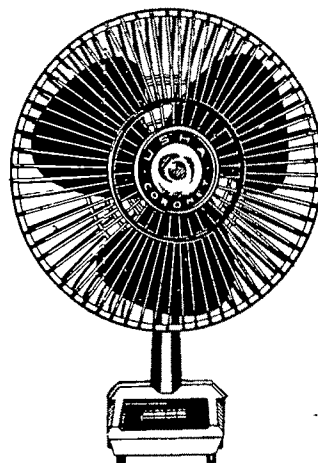
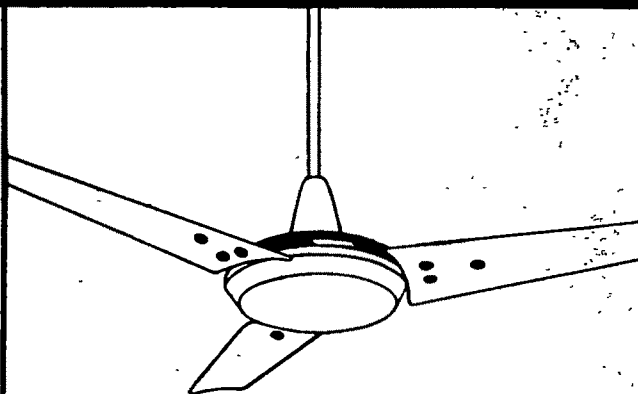
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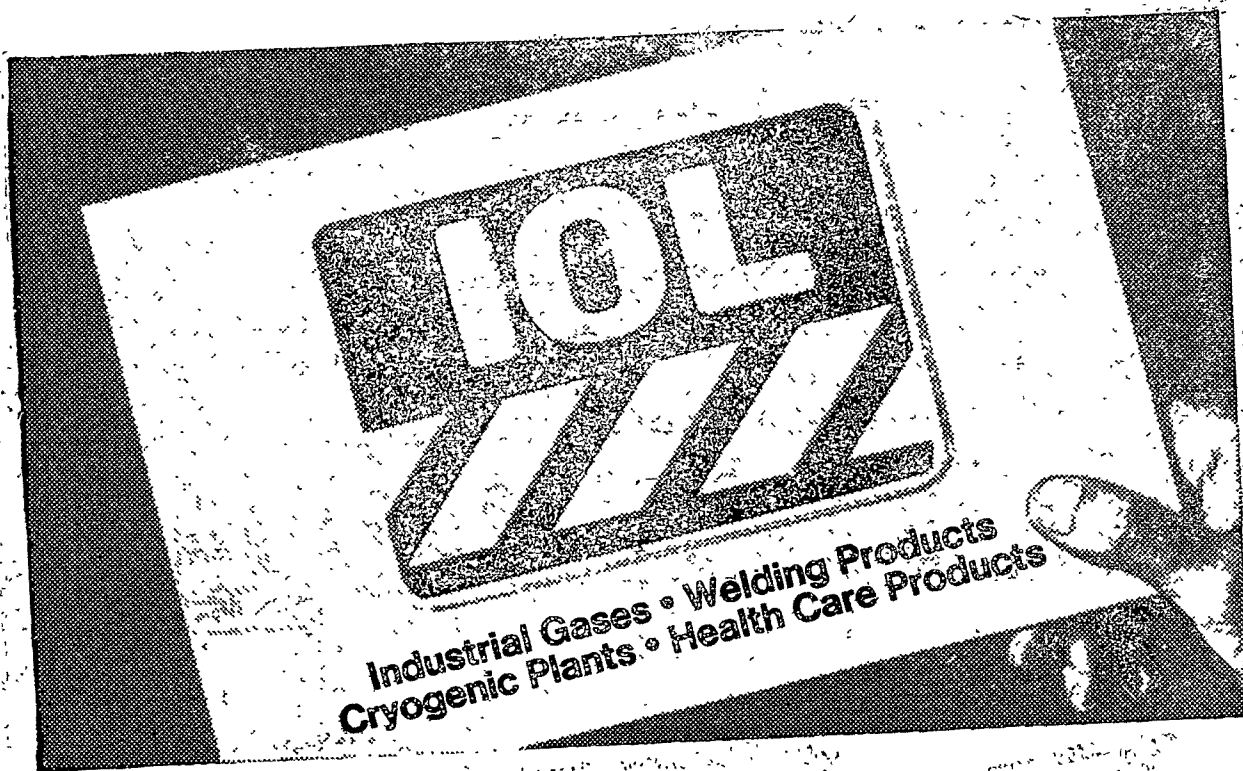
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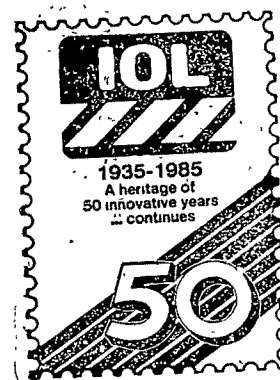
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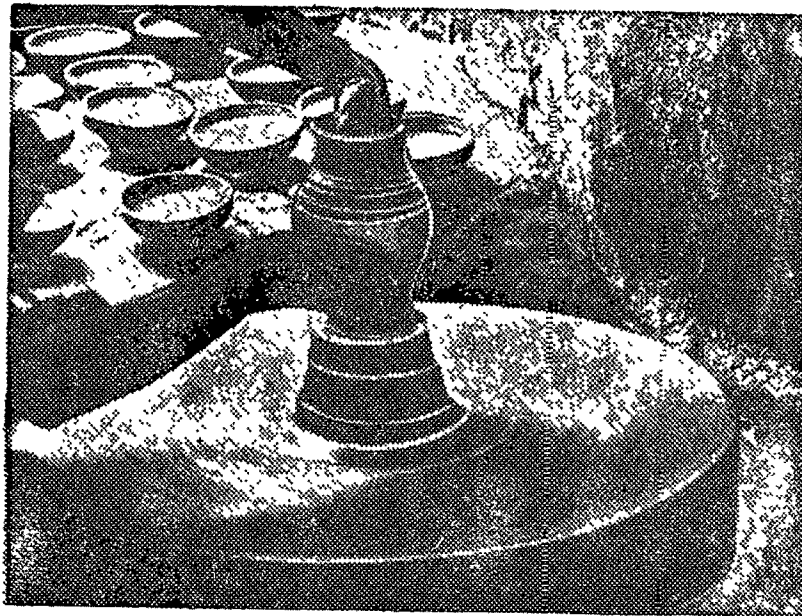


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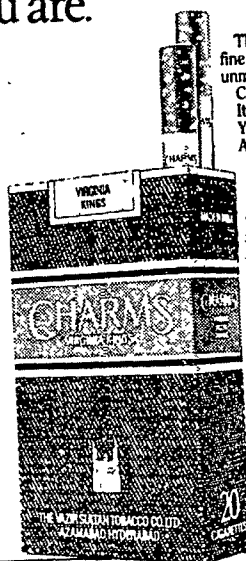


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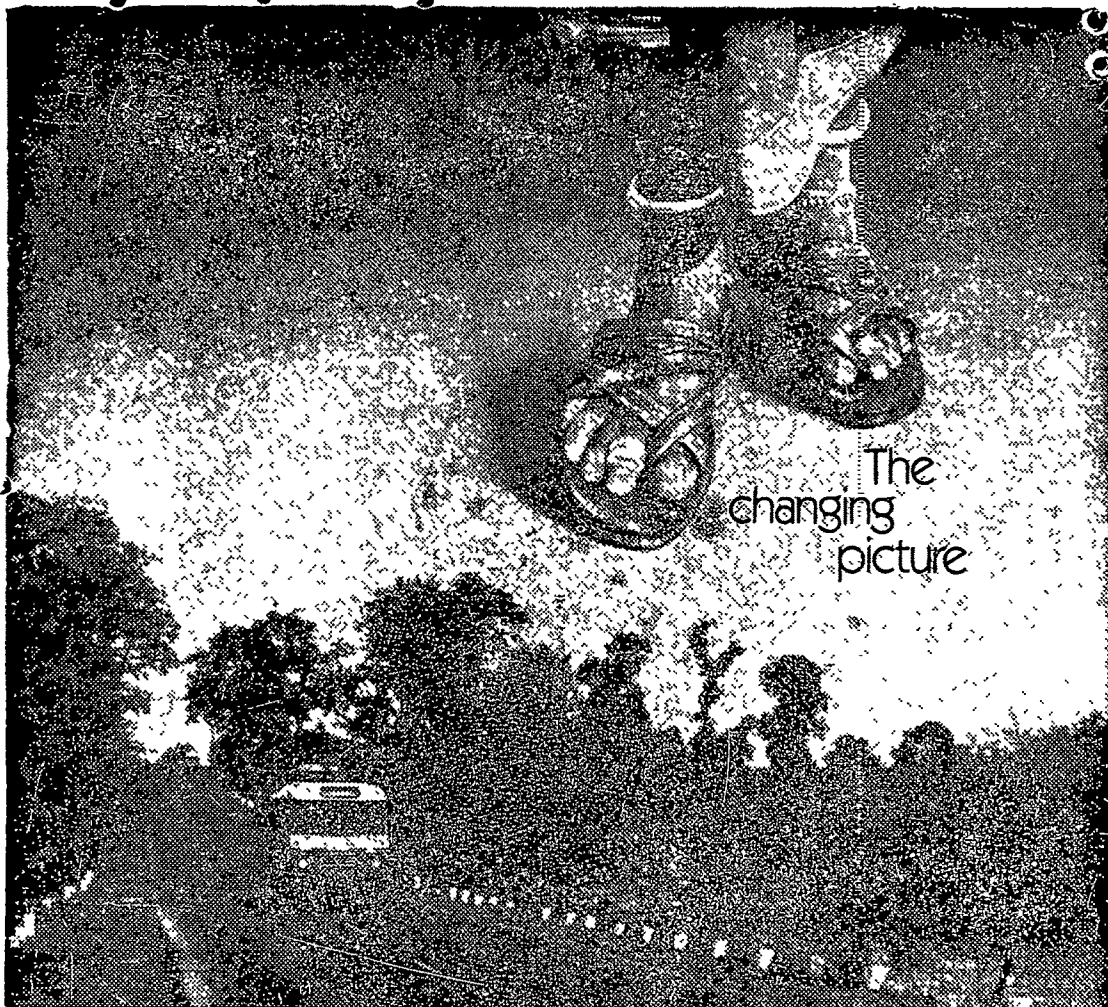
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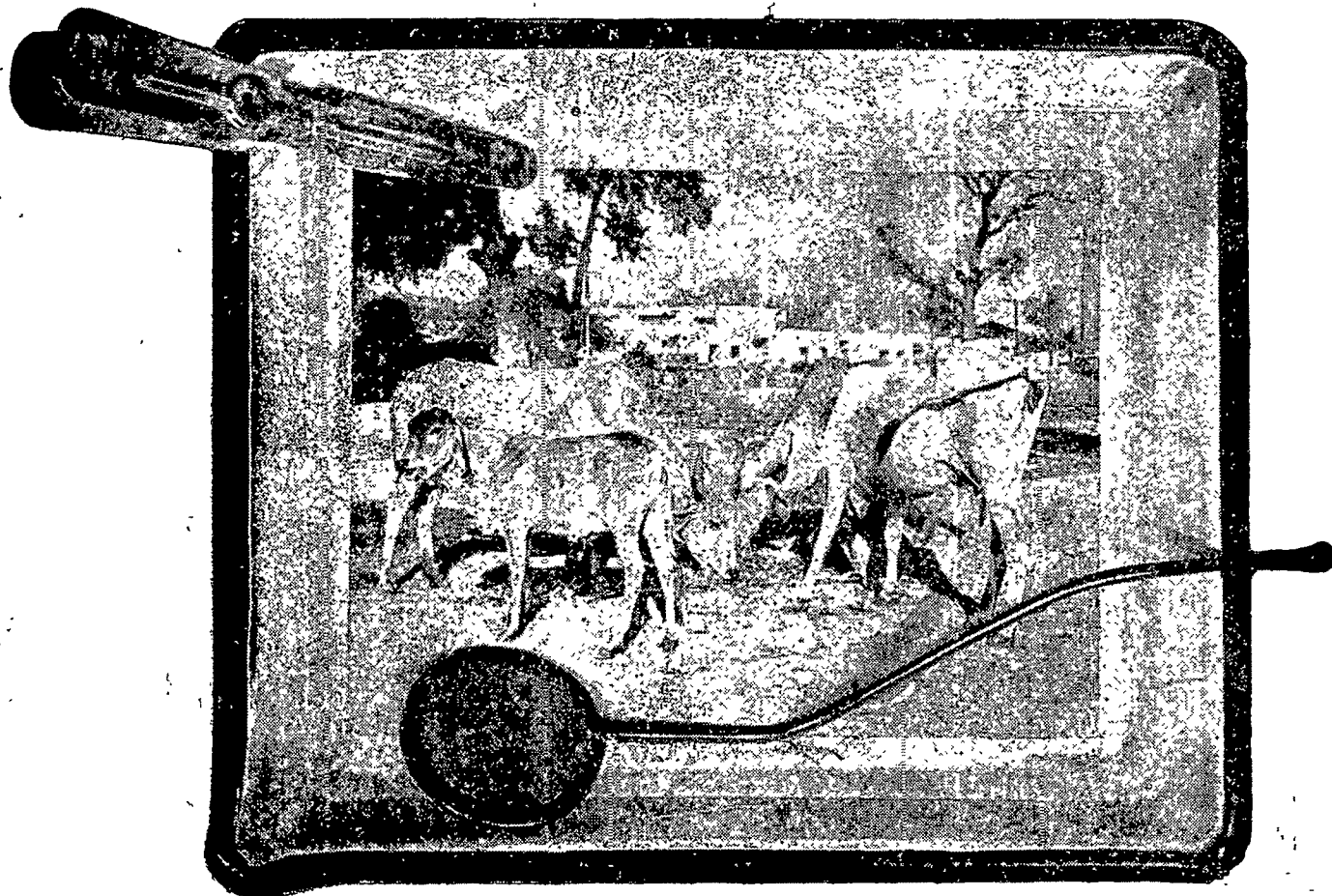
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NEXT MONTH : A WARLESS WORLD

309

THE FACES OF REALITY

a symposium on

the truth behind

some contemporary challenges

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A short statement of
the issues involved

IN THE SCHOOL

Krishna Kumar, Reader, Central Department
of Education, Delhi

WHITHER VOLUNTARY ACTION?

Harsh Sethi, Assistant Director, Indian
Council of Social Science Research,
Delhi

PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT

Sanjit Roy, Director, The Social Work
and Research Centre (SWRC), Tilonia,
Rajasthan

DEPOLITICISATION

B.P.R. Vithal, former Deputy Chairman, State
Development Board, Government of Andhra
Pradesh

SPYING AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Jagat Mehta, former Foreign Secretary,
Government of India

COMPUTER CRIME

T. Ananthachari, I.G.-cum-Chief Security
Officer, S.E. Railway, Calcutta

VIOLENCE

Sri Madhav Ashish, lives in the Kumaon Hills,
in charge of the Ashram founded by Krishna Prem

BOOKS

Reviewed by Jay Bhattacharjee, Niraja Gopal, Nandini Mongia
and Ajai Sahni

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury of Dilip Chowdhury
Associates

The problem

IT is difficult to know what reality is and, like the Japanese film, Rashoman, we have to be forever burrowing away at the countless views and facts, contradictory as they may seem, to get close to it. Statistics is one prop for reality, but one has to go behind the figures to grasp it. One must know not only what figures mean but what they do not mean.

We may pat ourselves on the back when we look at the number of primary schools we have given our children, but when we realise how many of them are without the tools of learning, we can only gasp at this negation of reality. Even more chilling is to discover that State governments actually return funds ear-marked for those same tools of learning because they have been either too lazy, or unconcerned, or oblivious of the fact that the money was meant to be utilised.

And this brings us to the whole point of the instruments we have given ourselves for administering the countless schemes and programmes announced from year to year. Should we monitor them through voluntary action and what is the state of such action today? How do we ensure people's participation and are the catalysts we employ, the urban educated, in a position to mobilise

such participation? Do we want to politicise our bureaucracy or not to politicise it? Either way the pitfalls are many and not so easily discernible unless analysed in depth.

Where do we draw the lines to make governance more effective, decision-making more independent? How do we make our bureaucrats more sovereign and remove the constraints that lead inevitably to the 'soft' situations where spying for small profit can be blown out of all proportion? Then, again, what do we need to do to prevent ourselves from falling into the disastrous scenarios of new technologies like computers if we do not anticipate what they can and cannot do?

And there is the violence contained within the discrepancy in the outer and inner reality. It can break all bounds as we have seen if we do not go a little below the surface for its causes. Violence is sweeping through the sub-continent. The daily newspaper is evidence enough.

This issue of SEMINAR deals with some of these seemingly unconnected issues, in an attempt to get a little closer to the reality around us.

In the school

KRISHNA KUMAR

DISCUSSIONS on primary education often start from the premise that India, with its 'developing' status, cannot spend any more than it is already spending on primary education. Economic constraints demand that we use primary education facilities to accomplish the absolutely essential priority which is the teaching of basic skills to the largest possible number of children. To accomplish this aim, the argument goes, Indian primary schools must make do with the bare minimum of educational apparatus, consisting of the teacher, blackboard, chalk, and the textbook. Even a place to sit is not regarded absolutely essential, otherwise the opening of a new primary school under a tent or shed would not carry State sanction. In short, primary schooling has been reduced to the bottom line of economy. At this level, no one can complain of waste of funds, indeed, only closure of schools can economize further.

One aspect of the economy practised in primary education is the

number of teachers per school. In this matter, there has been virtually no change over the last three decades. In 1950-51 there were 530,000 teachers in slightly over 200,000 schools (or about 2.5 teachers per school). Three decades later, in 1981-82, 1,360,000 teachers were employed in 490,000 primary schools which comes to about 2.7 teachers per school. As one might expect, there is a substantial number of schools with just one teacher. The proportion of such schools is over a third of the total, and another 27 per cent have just two teachers. In other words, primary schools with the maximum of two teachers per school comprise over 60 per cent of the total number of schools.

In theory, it is possible to run a primary school with a staff of one or two teachers. Advocates of single-teacher schools point out that other countries, including highly developed ones like Sweden, have such schools. I once had a chance to visit a single-teacher primary school in Sweden, and I have had many chances of visiting such schools in India, in Madhya Pradesh. Except

*Reproduced from 'Future', 1984, Summer-Autumn 11-12.

for the number of teachers employed, I would find it difficult to point out any other similarity between the schools in Sweden and Madhya Pradesh. The Swedish teacher worked in a spacious five-room building, equipped with a carefully made selection of children's literature, educational toys and other aids. Walls displayed children's own paintings and some other pictures. The curriculum she followed permitted her to make minimum intervention in the activities that children were doing on their own. Her job was to observe, occasionally check what was going on, assign new work, and direct group interest at the end of each activity.

Her counterpart in Madhya Pradesh worked in a structure of one room and a verandah. The wall and floors were bare. There was no furniture of any kind, no aids, no children's literature, no toys. The only educational equipment the teacher could use was the blackboard, and the only book children had access to was their own copy of the prescribed textbook. The teacher's job consisted of:

- lecturing to five different groups of children, representing five grades;
- assigning them work involving memorising, copying and writing down answers to comprehension questions, and finally;
- checking copybooks.

At times her task looked impossible. Although she was working very hard to get children's attention, it appeared inevitable that she would fail in her immediate aim of making the children literate. The long-range aim of inculcating in these children the desire and ability to learn was totally beyond the pedagogy that was taking place.

The pedagogy that took place in the two settings was so different undoubtedly because the curriculum was different. The training of the two teachers was different, and so was their perception of aim. But there was no mistaking the fact that the single major determinant of the pedagogical process in the Madhya

Pradesh school was the physical conditions.

The physical conditions of primary schools in India are depressing. I have selected six variables representing physical conditions to construct the table below on the basis of the data given in the report of the Fourth All India Educational Survey conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training during 1978-79. The variables are: 'permanent' building, blackboard, playground, library, drinking water, and lavatory. The picture that emerges from this table is that of a system which lacks even the bare minimum of institutional care in the majority of its schools. *Once we have registered that over 50 per cent of the primary schools in the country do not have a concrete structure or drinking water facility or playground, that 40 per cent of the schools are without blackboards, 70 per cent without libraries and 85 per cent without lavatory, all that remains is to wonder how teachers work under these conditions.*

Another aspect of the picture emerging from the foregoing data is that there is a substantial variation in the physical conditions of primary

schools in different parts of India. We find that not only are physical conditions consistently better in certain States than in others, but also that the States with better maintained primary schools are the ones with a higher rate of literacy. If we rank the larger Indian States in the order of the proportion of literates in the total population, and divide this list into an 'higher' and a 'lower' half, we will find that this division gives us the same picture that we would have obtained by ranking the States in the order of the physical conditions of their primary schools. What this indicates is that the structure of facilities in primary schools does have something to do with retention of children by the school and the durability of the basic skills learnt at school.

On the basis of this analysis, I would argue that unless the physical conditions of primary schools drastically improve in the country, particularly in the educationally backward States such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Uttar Pradesh, we cannot expect teachers to succeed in accomplishing even the more modest aims of primary education. Better textbooks, higher qualifica-

Physical conditions in primary schools

(All figures represent proportion in percentage to the total number of primary schools in each state)

	Permanent building	Drinking water	Lavatory	Black-board	Play-ground	Library
Andhra Pradesh	45	41	5	48	51	30
Assam	7	33	22	21	44	4
Bihar	24	28	2	49	16	34
Gujarat	74	51	23	100	64	65
Haryana	87	65	37	77	80	87
Himachal Pradesh	12	38	5	66	59	77
Jammu & Kashmir	23	34	6	85	40	44
Karnataka	72	23	4	85	46	40
Kerala	78	87	79	93	69	59
Madhya Pradesh	51	24	7	51	46	7
Maharashtra	64	47	13	80	49	37
Orissa	23	26	23	50	34	9
Punjab	55	79	32	43	68	49
Rajasthan	65	53	15	64	46	39
Tamil Nadu	70	65	24	87	78	82
Uttar Pradesh	71	44	15	54	48	23
West Bengal	20	48	16	71	41	53
India (including smaller states and Union territories)	47	41	15	60	47	29

tions for recruitment of teachers, higher emoluments and better training are important, but these alone will not make more than a marginal difference in schools where the child is denied the basic human dignity of sitting on covered floor space, having safe water to drink and using a clean lavatory. Again, *even the best qualified teacher cannot do much without a blackboard, a play space, and a selection of children's books.* Dependence on the prescribed textbook, along with a sterile environment will demoralize even the most highly motivated professional.

Trends in financial expenditure on education indicate that primary education is losing its priority position. With the expansion of higher education, many States have been increasing their expenditure on this sector at a higher rate than that applied to primary education. During the seventies, the annual increase in expenditure of higher education outpaced the increase in primary education in several States, and this happened not only in the more literate States such as Kerala, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu, but also in educationally backward States such as Bihar, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh.

In States such as Kerala and Maharashtra, where relatively higher rates of children's retention at school and accomplishment of permanent literacy have been achieved, the expansion of college education indicates an increase in the participation of deprived social groups. This explanation does not apply to States like Bihar and Orissa where drop-out rates are too high to permit more than a token presence of the poor in colleges. There the increase in expenditure on higher education shows that dominant sections of society are demanding more facilities for college and professional education at the State's expense. The enormous subsidy provided by the State for higher education undoubtedly hurts the interests of those groups whose power to make demands is weak and for whom even primary education is a dream.

of financial allocation as a competition. Different levels of education are valued differently by people according to their socio-economic status and needs. The richer strata of rural society and the urban middle class, for instance, take primary education for granted; what they perceive as 'need' is accessible and inexpensive college and professional education.

The labouring masses in villages, on the other hand, do not take primary education for granted; they see every day that only a few children survive five years of primary schooling. The allocation of money made to the different sectors of education thus reflects the level of care and attention available for different socio-economic classes of people. Comparison between allocations to primary as opposed to higher education has meaning only in view of this correspondence between educational finance and socio-economic classes.

At the higher education level, cost per pupil is high and the users are largely confined to the economically stronger sections of society. As J.L. Azad points out, (in *Financing of Higher Education in India*. New Delhi: Sterling, 1975) 'since the subsidy is given indiscriminately to the rich and the poor — the largest beneficiaries being the more affluent classes, mainly from the urban areas, who can afford to give their children higher education — the system is, to say the least, undemocratic.' It is indeed shocking that as much as 80 per cent of the total per student expenditure (including non-recurring) at higher education level is subsidized by the State. How justifiable is this subsidy when primary education whose availability and quality affect the overwhelming majority of people and the overall development of society is languishing for want of money and care?

It is a matter of little wonder that the difference in the unit cost of education between the underdeveloped and the developed countries is largest at the primary level. As the World Bank's Education Sector Policy Paper (1980) shows, the unit cost of higher education in the OCED countries (the Organization

of Economic Co-operation and Development consists of Western Europe, Turkey, the United States, Canada, Japan, Australia and New Zealand) is only 5.5 times greater than in the poorest among the underdeveloped countries, which is a much smaller difference than that at the primary education level where the unit cost in OECD countries is 33 times greater than in the most underdeveloped countries.

The message is clear — that *the sharpest contrast between the facilities available to the students of the rich as compared to the poor countries is at the primary education level.* The World Bank document says that the gap 'cannot be attributed to the gradual shift within total enrollment toward higher and more expensive education ... Even a small percentage decrease in unit costs of secondary and higher education could release additional funds for providing basic education to more people.'

It is hardly possible, then, to escape the realisation that the share of primary education in the total expenditure on education would have to increase quite substantially if the poor productivity of this sector is to be remedied. The present state of primary school infrastructure is characterised by a high rate of wastage and superficial gains for the children who attend school. The wastefulness of the system needs no fresh testimony; indeed, the high dropout rates in the early grades have changed very little over the last two decades. And, as J.P. Naik points out in *Education Commission and After*. (New Delhi: Allied, 1982) the number of 6-14 year olds out of school increased from 29 million in 1965-66 to 48 million in 1977-78. Of course this increase is related to the increase in population, but it is also related to the neglect of primary education, especially the neglect of the infrastructure of institutional amenities.

Once it is agreed that more funds are necessary for reconstructing primary education, an equally important point needs to be added which is that additional funds alone will not solve the problems primary education is facing. It is unbelievable

It may be misleading to portray the relative positions of primary and higher education in the matter

but true that in many States funds allotted to primary education are *not* fully used, that in fact a substantial proportion of these funds is diverted to other sectors of State expenditure. During 1980-81 Madhya Pradesh spent over 30 million rupees less than the approved allocation of 98 million for elementary education, representing an under-utilization and diversion of about a third of the available money. Similarly, West Bengal failed to spend Rs 39 million, Haryana 22 million, Punjab 10 million and Rajasthan about 2.1 million rupees during 1980-81. How does one account for this phenomenon?

The bureaucratic machinery responsible for expenditure on education, especially primary education, seems incapable of using funds that cannot be spent on salaries. Indeed, the machinery was not designed, nor was it ever refined, to handle any function other than that of recruiting employees and disbursing their monthly salaries as long as they worked, and their pensions thereafter. Even supervision and evaluation of the employees' performance were marginal functions. The machinery could easily handle recurring expenditure, but behaved reluctantly when faced with non-recurring funds meant for items like accommodation, libraries, and playgrounds. Research, innovative experiments, and in-service training were unheard of in the days when the system was set up.

These traits of the machinery continue to be reflected in the break-up of expenditure on primary education in the adjoining table for 1978-79. The face of primary school education in India cannot brighten unless we upgrade the bureaucratic machinery responsible for spending money. Those who man this nineteenth-century edifice continue to believe that their main task is done when all the teachers have been paid their monthly dues. This is how 95 per cent, and in many States more, of the funds allocated to primary education are spent. Money left over from salary computations, and the few other minor administrative routines, is regarded as useless, so it is diverted. The idea that primary education may have other

requirements that are just as crucial as teachers' salaries arouses no interest for the decision-makers and book-keepers of public instruction. If someone suggested to these (mostly) men that 20 sets of wooden blocks or 50 small books of children's literature could be sent to each primary school out of the money that is left over, the suggestion would probably be annihilated by laughter.

Why could not, one might naively ask, left over funds be diverted at least towards repair of buildings? In Madhya Pradesh alone there are over twenty five thousand primary schools without a permanent construction, and surely 30 million rupees in one year could have changed the face of at least 600 primary schools. Such a suggestion would be treated as even more ludicrous than the previous one because this involves transfer of funds for recurring expense to capital account. The two kinds of expenditure are governed by two altogether different sets of laws. The idea of transfer of funds from one to the other is tediously imaginative.

It is not a question of finding a dynamic civil servant and putting him in the education department so that he opens fresh channels of State action and releases funds for these channels. Departments of education in various States are not devoid of such dynamic officers; in fact, many States have such people in top-ranking positions. Sometimes external sources of funding and non-governmental agencies are able to use the presence of such officers to launch new projects. This kind of 'bypass-action' does some good in local pockets, but it neither builds new capacities in the system nor does its impact last longer than 'our' man's stay in the education department. In any case, can this type of maverick action ever bring the larger system of allocation and expenditure under therapeutic stress?

We must make a conceptual breakthrough in our thinking about the primary school — what sort of place it should be and what sort of things it must do. The concept of a primary school as a place where children come with their textbooks

and sit down to listen to the teacher cannot give us any better results. *As long as the primary school remains a bare structure of four or eight walls and a roof, and as long as this image is legitimized in the name of economy, we may as well forget about revitalizing primary education.* Learning, in the sense in which this term is understood since Pestalozzi, and more recently since Piaget, cannot occur in a place as bare and barren as our primary schools. Conditions under which children can learn require the presence of a minimum number of concrete objects, such as play material and children's literature, and amenities that include furniture, water, toilet, and play space. Are these items too expensive for India?

How funds are spent on primary education (1978-79)

	Rs. In million	Percentage of total
Teachers' salary	6,218.14	95.3
Administration and supervision	121.31	1.9
Others	73.42	1.1
Capital	113.93	1.7
	6,526.80	100

Source: *An Analysis of the Situation of Children in India*. New Delhi: UNICEF, 1984.

The argument that a poor country can only afford a poor primary school is deceptive. It does not explain how the poor country is about to supply microcomputers to all its higher secondary schools. Supplying wooden blocks, children's literature, and furniture to all primary schools would be cheaper. It might be said that the computer-literacy programme has been triggered off by a gesture of aid. Surely India can find aid-agencies that will happily subsidize the supply of items I have mentioned, and in much larger number of pilot schools than the 250 where the computer-literacy programme has begun. I am not by any means advocating increase in foreign aid in education, and I believe that we do not need aid to give our primary schools a human shape.

The real issue is not 'where do we find the funds' but our sense of priorities and our basic rationality. It seems that fiscal policy in education today is totally adrift. The sense of priority has vanished; only pressures elicit response. Can pressures be generated on behalf of primary education?

Those interested in creating such pressures must be clear in their mind about what they want. Many earlier proposals for improvements have walked into the fence of 'basic skills', better textbooks, and in-service training. These are dangerous and deceptive outposts of conventional thinking; they lead nowhere but back to yet another round of evaluation of yet another new set of third-rate materials. It is somewhat strange that repeated failure along the 're-writing textbooks-retraining teachers' route has not led to rethinking about the route itself. Why the route itself is bad we can find out by reading any of the great innovators in the recent history of primary education, such as Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Sybil Marshal and Susan Isaacs.

What we learn from the experience of these modern teachers is that the 'basic skills' do not develop by themselves or in a vacuum. The so-called 'skills' of reading, writing and arithmetic are acquired by children not as isolated accomplishments, but rather as part of the overall development process. The child who learns to read, and who can make sense of what she reads, is one whose mind has experienced a long series of meaningful symbolic interactions with others, with materials, and with her own creations. Similarly, the child who has learnt to write and who is going to use writing in his life for a purpose has already developed a sense of audience which involves a sense of the self.

Such development is an unlikely event in the bare, sad and oppressive atmosphere of a typical Indian primary school. It takes a repertoire of concrete objects, a good selection of children's literature (with copies enough for *every* child), and a varied organization of daily activities by the teacher to ensure that the majority of children attending school will acquire stable basic skills.

Whither voluntary action?

HARSH SETHI

WE face today a situation wherein the needs and rights of the bottom 30 per cent of our population are not and, possibly, cannot even be recognized by the official development apparatus. Earlier, even when people and groups were considered marginal, there was always the hope that through State and non-State processes, they would be pulled into the mainstream economy and society. Little did we realize that our development process itself would convert these people from 'the marginalised' to 'the expendable.'

These 'citizens' have no voice which can be heard, no entitlements which can bring them into the decision-making calculus of the State. When the only way in which a people can even attract attention is by raising demands and agitating, the chances are that the problematique of development (expected to respond to needs and desires) will get converted into one of confrontation. Perceived as a nuisance, the poor and any activity carried out along with them (welfare/developmental/mobilisational) is then seen primarily as a threat in 'law and order' terms.

Voluntary grass-roots/non-party social action groups represent one institutional mechanism through which attempts have been made to articulate the needs of the marginalised, to empower them so that the mainstream society is forced to respond. In the vacuum created by the 'developmental failures' of the State, and the inability of the existing political parties (of all shades) to recognise/articulate and mobilise the resultant discontent — it has been the social action groups which have been thrown into the forefront. Many of us have looked at these attempts — weak/sporadic/fragmented—with hope. And now it is this very sector whose existence seems in danger.

What follows is an attempt to intervene in the rather heated, often confusing debate going on in the different social-action group circles about the implications of the recent changes in the Foreign Contributions Act (1976); the 'elevation' of voluntary agencies in the Draft Seventh Five Year Plan as key actors in the implementation of the anti-poverty programmes, and the increased acrimony and tension that different voluntary groups are experiencing vis-a-vis the various political party formations.

To add to the cup of woes, there is the Kudal Commission enquiring into the affairs of the Gandhian/Sarvodaya groups. Equally serious is the increased intolerance of the State apparatus towards any attempt at organising the poor. This can be seen in the recent attacks on civil liberty organisations, viz., the crack-

down on the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee or even proclaiming groups like that of Srilatha Swaminathan as 'untouchable' by the Department of Home Affairs, Government of Rajasthan.

Before examining a few of these 'perceived threats' in greater detail it might be worthwhile briefly to outline the political context in which the different groups are operating.

We live today in a situation where both the ideology and the instrumentalities of the modern Indian State seem to have changed. The country is slowly shedding the ambivalence of its earlier populist rhetoric. The ideological world view of our rulers is now stated in terms of growth without much concern for distributive justice; modernization without much care for the implications of our kind of industrialization and urbanization; homogenization without a thought for cultural and ethnic minorities. We just have to glance through the first budget of the Rajiv Gandhi Government to be clear about its intentions.

It might also be useful to recall the various slogans, appeals and symbolisms used in the recent Parliamentary and Assembly elections. The official response to either the anti-Sikh riots or the Bhopal tragedy (both of which have been commented upon in great detail) are enough of an indication of the thinking of our elected rulers. In brief, we have a steady degeneration and dismantling of all our mediating institutions, and a change in the culture of politics giving rise to a new intolerance — to any form of dissent. Because we are in a hurry. To reach the 21st Century. Patient processes of rebuilding and reconciliation have no place in this scheme of things.

One implication of this situation is that the political actors face a 'peculiar inversion' of issues and strategies. As the conflict over slowly growing 'resources' becomes more intense, issues and strategies which were once considered progressive can no longer be interpreted in the same light. For instance, communalism was once considered

the byproduct of revivalist tendencies. Communal conflicts were engendered by people who were non or anti-modern. They emerged out of a feeling of grievance when one community started, in a relative sense, improving its position. The base was jealousy.

Not so now. The current communal conflicts are a direct byproduct of our modernization and secularisation. If earlier, the 'secular principle' implied a protection to cultural and ethnic minorities such that they could build themselves up and join the mainstream, today in the name of secularism, we want the abolishing of all 'positive discrimination'. The slogans of universal principles are today invoked to defend the rich, the well-to-do — upper castes and classes. The notions of justice, equality before law, etc., are paraded to defend the rights of the exploiting sections. It is the anti-reservation riots which are the new expressions of communalism.

The recent struggles of the slum and pavement dwellers in each of our large cities is another illustration of the problematique. Having cornered the best land for themselves, and built up the cities on the sweated labour of the poor, the rich now deny the poor any access to living space. Even an injunction from the Supreme Court did not stop the Municipal Commissioner's office in Bombay from continuing with the demolition drive. The pathos of the pavement dwellers would earlier have evoked some response. Not so now.

The police, the politicians, the media, the advertisement agencies, even the liberal citizenry — all rallied behind the Commissioner. He was in fact lauded as a hero fighting for the rights of 'the loyal tax paying citizens', an honest bureaucrat cleansing the city of its filth. Not a word about the vacant land being used for speculation, or a violation of the FS index by the builders. The problem of 'overbuilding' by the rich is conveniently converted into the congestion being caused by the poor. In the name of 'rational' city planning, we now want to get rid of the poor.

(Those interested in further details on this debate might benefit from viewing a recent documentary, 'Bombay—Our City', by Anand Patwardhan).

In such a situation separating right from wrong, fact from fiction, becomes well nigh impossible. It is not only that the problems have become incredibly complex and intertwined, the dividing lines between classes and issues have become blurred. And because everyone feels more threatened and pushed into a corner, reasoned debate gets replaced by assertions.

This long preamble, much of it obvious, was necessary contextually to locate the discussions on the more specific issues that follow.

To sustain an activity, funds are necessary. But where do they come from and how do different groups meet their needs? The best situation would be for the groups to have their own funds generated either out of their economic activity, or from contributions from their middle-class sympathisers and base groups. But since the base population is itself fighting for survival, expecting it to support others is hardly feasible. Similarly, the number of middle-class sympathisers is strictly limited and the available ones are usually stretched to their limits, caught as they are between the twin pincers of inflationary forces and escalating demands from diverse groups. In such a situation characterized by a low and insecure financial base, most groups are forced to seek institutional financial support.

Government assistance is neither easily available (notwithstanding claims that the funds for voluntary agencies have been increased manifold), nor is it worthwhile expecting it for programmes that are not directly supportive of the State. As for the corporate sector — (a) its funding bias is very clear; and (b) even the little money that did go towards supporting worthwhile non-party activity froze when, a few years back, the government tried to modify Section 35 c-c. of the Income Tax Act. The attempt, fortunately thwarted, to channelise all corporate finances into the Prime

Minister's Relief and Rural Development Funds, served its purpose. The message went home.

The only institutional sources that remain are the foreign funding agencies, and linking up with them involves an entirely new set of dilemmas, including moral. Nevertheless, it is a reality (no matter how unwelcome) that access to foreign funding sources represents the 'life-line' for many of the social action groups.

The recent changes in the Foreign Contributions Act (1976) which now necessitate any group receiving foreign funds to seek prior registration with the Ministry of Home Affairs, have to be seen in this context. Is this just a simple and innocuous move designed to monitor the flow of foreign funds to Indian nationals? After all, does not every government have a right to know about this linkage, particularly when misuse of such funds is not unheard of? But why the Ministry of Home Affairs? Would not the banking system do?

Is the attempt to concentrate such information with the Home Ministry part of a strategy to freeze out a vital source of financial support to a set of groups seen as 'dissident'? After all, the clearance from the Home Ministry is dependent upon receiving a clean chit from the local administration of the area that the group is working in. And for active groups, the reactions of the administration are fairly predictable. The fact that the ministry is already likely to have information about the 'notable' dissident groups, or that given its proverbial inefficiency it would hardly be in a position to act on the information that it gathers — provides little comfort to those likely to be affected.

Moreover, it is interesting to note that the government has sought no ban either on foreign funds or on foreign funding agencies. Both can and will continue. The difference is that without annoying the agencies, the government can now, by either delaying or refusing the registration, direct and control the flow of these funds. This, in conjunction with the previous attempt to control the

sources of indigenous funding, can easily end up narrowing the financial options before the voluntary sector.

A more significant point is the emphasis on the word 'foreign'. The attempt seems to be to paint all dissenting groups as foreign inspired. And this in a situation when there is no end of propaganda about externally inspired destabilising moves, can easily end up painting the voluntary groups that receive foreign funds and do not toe the line as 'anti-national'.

This debate has been commented upon in some detail to illustrate the peculiar inversion process that takes place in our current climate. The entire discussion on the F.C. Act (1976) has become so structured that if one ends up arguing against the new restrictions, one is immediately branded as a supporter of 'imperialist penetration' in the country. Few people point out that the argument is not for a continuation or an increase in foreign funding per se, but rather against the application of discriminatory and restricting criteria.

On the other hand, all those who bewail the tighter 'financial environment' rarely raise the more fundamental questions embedded in this financial maze. Is the question only about the availability of finances or also about how these finances (both foreign and Indian) are affecting the work and the objectives that the different groups espouse? Is it not, at least partly true, that the availability of 'relatively easy' money comes in the way of the groups attempting a process of work which may be economically more trying, but would pay richer political dividends in the long run?

Rarely do the groups realise that, all too often, availability of easy finances converts them into small business establishments. The issue of finances is not only economic, but political. In the long run there is no escape from forging closer relationships with the base groups and the middle-class supporters. After all, if the eventual aim is to widen the base of people actively involved in the struggle for social transformation, then is it not in

that direction that our energies ought to be directed?

For a sector that identifies itself as non-governmental, the issue of relationship with the government and its various programmes has always been the subject of heated and interminable debates. This is partly due to the tremendous heterogeneity of views and activities within the groups, as also to the different stances taken by the government at different times, for different groups, and for different activities.

Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that the dominant thrust of the government, through its entire repertoire of strategies, is simply one of containment. It seems to be looking for a 'voluntary non-party sector' which accepts the ideology, spirit, and content of the official programmes and carries them out in the desired manner. When perceived as collaborative, the 'voluntary sector' can expect assistance, recognition, and rewards. Otherwise, it faces either a financial squeeze (as in the case of groups in Rajasthan referred to earlier), or face a judicial enquiry (a-la-the Kudal Commission); or straight repression. This pattern does not change irrespective of which party is in command of the government.

None of this needs elaboration because all this has been a shared legacy of the groups, as has been the usual attitude of intransigence and dismissal characteristic of officialdom at large. The current debate however is on the more recent moves by the Central Government, that of giving voluntary agencies a central role in the Seventh Plan.

For the first time, the Seventh Plan carries a special chapter on voluntary agencies. The Commission has appointed a special consultant for this purpose. Sixteen different ministries are looking for people who will help them strengthen this relationship. Consultative meetings have been held in many States, often at district levels. Agencies and programmes have been identified and funds have been allocated.

What does all this imply?

Is it, as the protagonists of such a move would claim, that the voluntary agencies have finally arrived; that the government is finally looking outside the bureaucracy for support to implement the anti-poverty programmes more efficiently. Is this not what a government ought to do in any case? Don't we want the different programmes to be implemented better? True, and if we look at the new strategy mix in this manner, then does not all this represent a new and massive possibility of increasing the degree of 'popular participation' in government.

The same moves however may have a few other implications which are likely to go unnoticed. The first relates to the government wanting to privatise its official functions. This would probably be truer for welfare activities. Under the guise of involving the people, the government can cut back on its promised programmes — of health, education, rehabilitation, etc. — because these areas are now expected to be tackled by the voluntary sector. Even in the area of 'mobilising and organizing the rural poor', an activity stressed in the new documents, the government, by promoting 'non-political mobilisation' can simultaneously gain legitimacy for itself, while delegitimising other efforts to mobilise and unite the people with long-term political objectives.

Thus, while one set of agencies organising landless labour for fair wages is lauded, similar activity carried out by the Ryot Coolie Sanghams is violently put down. Constantly defending these programmes as major extensions of democracy, the government can, by defining the 'space' within which the different organisations and agencies are expected to function, decide not only what issues are crucial, but how they ought to be tackled. From the *garibi hatao* slogan earlier, to the involvement of voluntary agencies now, we can discern the increasing sophistication in the strategy of cooptation.

As in the case of the debate on the F.C. Act, this debate too has got stuck at defending or opposing these moves. The reality however

is far more complex. For a start, most groups would probably welcome these moves, because this is what they have been involved in. The few who have had no dealings with the government, too, are likely to see little change in the situation. Only those groups which have been working on issues which the government has now taken up, and are trying to carry out their programmes in a different style, are likely to face the greatest difficulty. This is because the criteria of 'legitimacy' have now been laid down — the space for citizens' initiative has been monopolised.

The groups have to realise that the struggle is not simply for or against an official programme, but a search for truth and justice. If they will be coopted it will partly be due to their own weaknesses. The challenge thus is how to extend the official programmes while maintaining a criticality.

What have different social action groups done now to come under increased attack by the various political parties? If the Congress (I) cannot tolerate even a Nagrik Ekta Manch working for the rehabilitation of riot victims in Delhi, the others are no better. The Communist parties have labelled all the groups as 'part of an imperialist conspiracy' to destabilise the country and to counter the growing influence of their party/ies. Papers such as *Patriot* call even the PUCL a CIA Front, *Link* attacked the voluntary groups in Rajasthan. This tendency is shared equally by the more Right-wing parties. Maharashtra has seen many clashes between independent groups and fronts of the Congress (I) and the B.J.P. such as Hindu Ekta, Patit Pawan etc. The political party literature on the 'socially active groups' only sees them as having been set up with the express purpose of destabilising the parties and thus, by association, the country. This feeling has of late grown into a tirade, strongly affecting the morale of the different activist groups which have often looked to the parties of their inclination for at least moral support.

Some of the reasons for the increased tension can probably be

derived from the changing nature of the political parties, the political process and the dominant political culture in the country. As was hinted at earlier, we seem to be in a phase where politics has, at the margin, got reduced to fighting (and hopefully winning) elections at all levels.

With the organisational base of all political parties steadily declining (this is as true of the Left parties as it is of the B.J.P. or the Congress), and the *raison-d'être* of politics becoming the capture of State power through the electoral process, sectors of the population which do not form a viable political constituency and the issues that directly concern them, get left by the wayside. But, it is not as if the issues themselves do not remain real: they merely become invisible to the 'normal electoral political process'. It is here that the different activist groups have made their biggest contribution by trying to work in sectors and with people and issues that the parties have not much cared about.

So long as these groups and activities were either insignificant, or seen in non-political terms, or were carried out under the aegis or support of a political party, there was little trouble. After all, have not the different Gandhian/Sarvodaya groups worked for decades in Gujarat without any conflict with the Congress? The same is true of areas where other political parties, say of the Left, are dominant,

What has probably changed now is that many of the groups have started vigorously asserting themselves against the local elite, sometimes against the State machinery, and periodically against the local units of the different political parties in the areas of their operation. And when this process gains some strength, as for instance in different forest tracts, amongst contractual mine workers, in urban slums, with fisherfolk etc., the political parties start feeling insecure. For one, they lose credibility because struggles and movements are now being carried on outside their fold. Sometimes their ability to attract and retain

dedicated and militant cadre declines. But, most importantly, it is their 'style of politics' that gets questioned, and this no political party can tolerate.

This tension has increased particularly since more social action groups perceive themselves and their activities in political terms. This is true not only of the mobilisation oriented groups, but equally of groups involved with education, health etc., work. In an environment where the only 'acceptable' understanding of politics is that of 'party-based politics', any assertion of this new and as yet undefined politics can and does cause serious misgivings. What was earlier understood (and tolerated) as 'non-party' (read as non-political) gets in this process transformed into 'anti-party'. We thus have a basis for the formation of two warring camps. In such a situation, the groups and the parties can view each other only in antagonistic terms. Each sees the other as threatening to its own kind of politics — the parties fearing a decline in their areas of influence, the groups fearing for their autonomy.

While the reasons why different political party formations do not relate positively to the social action groups are reasonably clear, it must be stressed that the groups too have contributed towards vitiating the atmosphere. Having taken their political image seriously, unfortunately without sufficient ideological clarity, they often end up painting all political parties in 'villainous' colours. In particular, many of them end up attacking the Left parties for betraying the revolution.

In today's situation, when the dominant tendency is to replace politics with management, with the society facing the live danger of communal and technological homogenisation, such ascerbic debate is likely to serve little purpose. The current trends are hostile not only to the social action groups but also to all political forces of a Left and democratic persuasion. While the groups do represent an urge for a 'new and different politics' they have yet to define its contours. Both groups and parties need more to learn how to work together and

tackle the urgent problems, rather than fight each other.

The social action groups thus face a far more hostile environment today than they ever had before in the past. While the current debate is linked to the role of the government and the political parties, and how their moves and attitudes squeeze out the 'relevant space' for the groups to function in, the focus, in my view, should not be limited to the changes in the external environment alone. After all, a change becomes threatening only if the organisation(s) in question find themselves unable to cope with these changes. It is in learning how to re-equip to meet the changes that the real challenge lies. Playing the 'hurt innocent' is unlikely to take any of the groups very far.

The social-action groups so far had always operated on the assumption of a stable State and institutional environment. Yes, there were issues, particularly related to the poor, that our system was not addressing itself to — and it is towards such people and the issues that the groups focussed their attention. This focus took two forms.

One was the phenomenon of local groups addressing themselves to local issues in search for local solutions. This role was seen as a permanent one because it was evident to most that neither the government, nor the political parties could ever effectively hope to handle such tasks. Such groups are now facing two problems. The first relates to the realisation that local problems too are interlinked to wider questions, and in any case solutions are not always available locally. The second emerges from the 'heightened conflict' over the control of local resources. The groups often tend to get caught between the growing assertiveness to both the oppressed and the elite. The wider links of the latter then pose the stark questions of survival.

The second area where different non-party social action groups have been somewhat successful is in raising and mobilising over issues that do not relate to an easily identifiable politico-electoral constituency. Issues of civil and human rights, of oppression of women, of a development

path that degrades the environment etc., both belong to everyone and to no one. Even here, the groups are slowly realising that these issues are interlinked, both amongst themselves and to the State and social structure.

Increasingly, thus, the groups are being forced to move outside the mould in which they had been cast, that of side-tracking the questions related to the nature of the Indian State. New roles, earlier conveniently left to the State and political parties, now get thrown into the 'lap' of the groups which, to say the least, they are totally unequipped to face.

One such critical dilemma relates to the questions around the participation in electoral politics. So far, the groups (including the Marxist-Leninist and the radical Sarvodayites) had managed to keep themselves 'pure' on this count. But now, as they witness the complete degeneration of the electoral process and the decay of the different political parties, the question of their role does arise.

Whether or not control of the State machinery facilitates a social and structural transformation, a degenerate set of rulers can effectively constrain the space in which groups and classes function. The electoral system represents a reality that not only cannot be wished away, but matters. More so, when the 'system' seems in no imminent danger of collapse, do not the groups, as concerned citizens, have a role in revitalising the democratic (including electoral) institutions and processes?

On the other hand, the fate of all those who entered the electoral game is also clear to all groups. And unless they are so arrogant as to believe that they will not repeat the errors of the early communists and socialists, they have to be alive to the dangers that such participation poses. The current demands of the electoral process in terms of time, money, scarce energy and manpower, is also so overpowering that involvement in this sphere might imply that other, equally basic, tasks would get neglected.

The process which pushes local and issue based groups and federations to assume interventionist roles in a macro-societal frame creates its own set of pressures. For now not only are the issues more complex, the scale on which the acts have to be designed is much larger. Can the groups cope with the challenge?

What is happening currently is that there are two simultaneous pressures operating on each of the groups. In the absence of a large enough number of 'new social activists and groups' the pressure is for each individual and group to take on more functions than they can handle efficiently. One tendency is for the groups to expand the number of their activists. To begin this is very difficult because the number of people willing to be involved in the struggle for 'lost causes' is not really expanding. But even if activists were available, increasing the group size raises immediate questions of bureaucratisation and finances. The attention then often diverts from addressing the problems to that of managing the groups. What also often suffers is the quality and the depth to which the original specialised activity of the group was being carried out.

A second strategy, that of promoting and strengthening the efforts towards networking and coordination, such that while each group handles the issues that it is most competent at, the wider struggle too both expands and deepens, is more easily said than done. Networking and coordination requires not only fairly sophisticated programming of roles and functions, it demands a very high level of trust between participants and a willingness to control individual and group egos.

The history of 'networking' in the country is unfortunately replete with fights and bickerings. Each group has its own historical legacy which it finds difficult to shed. Those who assume coordination responsibilities then spend all their time nursing bruised egos, or centralizing roles in themselves because they are not sure that the others will handle them well. Not very different from what Mrs. Gandhi did or any of our other

political figures do! As important as the problem of egos and collective identity is the fact that different groups perceive the 'urgency' factor very differently, and thus while constantly complaining that 'people are not willing to work together' make no serious effort to overcome the limitations of their received styles and histories.

The net result of an absence of an organisational structure and theory, an essential pre-requisite for decentralised collective functioning is the mess that most groups find themselves in. They cannot afford to withdraw into their own little shells because the situation demands a response of a different type and at a different level. Nor can they work together, with the result that each attempt, though involving a lot of sincere effort, remains at the level of a partial failure. In such a situation something has to give — and the first casualties are the key actors. Harassed, pushed constantly for time, impatient at the lack of change, they slowly become nervous wrecks.

Is it that these different autonomous attempts acquire a larger significance only in the context of a movement, a movement which can draw in these different experiences and talents and simultaneously give them meaning? It almost appears that in the absence of such a situation, individual fragmented activities never really aggregate. But, then, is this not a chicken and egg problem? If we are to wait for a movement, then maybe we would wait for ever.

Will the groups ever be able to move out of this syndrome of collective inability? The current trends are not very promising. There are however no options and, unless the groups get on to the task of restructuring themselves — relying more on other groups and base populations, realising that no group or individual can play a central role, that government agencies and functionaries as also political parties cannot be seen in purely antagonistic terms. In short, unless the base of creative dissidence grows, we as a people will only be residuals of a historical process which we will have little say in. The threats are real. The need is to convert them into challenges.

Participation in development

SANJIT ROY

THE two most widely abused words that may mean so many things to so many people are 'participation' and 'development'. What they mean so far as the rural areas are concerned has been discussed so often that, at the outset, I must strengthen my case with a quotation from George Orwell: 'We have now sunk to a depth at which re-statement of the obvious is the first duty of intelligent men.' It's time for a re-statement because so much has been said on the subject that it has lost all meaning and sense and has come to the stage of gross misinterpretation.

To the person who looks on development as a game of numbers, and the only reality he faces is what he has read on paper, what does he know about participation? To the urban trained whizz kid who thinks the world owes him something, what does he know about the problems of the rural poor never free from hunger, want or fear? Are these people really necessary in the world of development? Could we not do without their participation? Would the village/slum be a better place without their fancy ideas and cock-eyed theories and preconceived notions?

I am inclined to think so. Fifteen years ago when I started working in the villages of Rajasthan, I thought it was necessary to professionalise volunteerism, bring in more urban skills, managerial expertise and other inputs. Now I am not so sure. I have changed my definition of professionalism. I have found urban skills to be counter-productive if, more often than not, they are not linked to other qualities and values more important than service. Degrees I have found to be irrelevant: the more qualified, the more chances there are of the person doing greater harm than good. This is because he comes with high expectations, preconceived notions and an arrogance which is unhealthy.

Very few are prepared to go through an unlearning process, to start from scratch as human beings and look on those in the village with different eyes. They lack patience and have no way of coping with the slow pace in a village. They expect results in double quick time, expect gratitude, love and affection and expect to be considered one of 'them' — but never missing an opportunity to mention how much they have sacrificed to live and work in a village.

They do not have the ability to listen silently, act quietly and show respect for other people's views, whatever the source. They have lost the ability to improvise and work with their hands: they need machines, equipment and God knows what else to be effective. Ask them if they see a difference between literacy and education and they will not know what you are talking about. Actually, they have been taught to make simple things look complicated and inexpensive appliances to look costly, formidable and inaccessible.

There is no doubt that the biggest threat to development today is from the breed we call the Educated Man. He is in fact literate but totally uneducated. He should be enlightened, open to new ideas, believe in the rule of law and want to help the poor raise their standard of living. In reality the person who passes off as an educated man has a vested interest in keeping the poor poor. Who embezzles funds, writes fictitious reports, plays with figures, breaks the law at the village level and gets away with it? Only those who call themselves educated. Who grab land and take the poor to court and use the power of the word for their own ends? Who draw subsidies on non-existent persons and make others pay, break the law for their relations but enforce it to preserve their status

but the educated? The doctor misuses medicines and starts private practice on government time and money: the teacher draws a salary but never comes to school: the policeman breaks the law he is supposed to enforce.

In the eyes of the world they are all supposed to be educated. Why blame the poor then for keeping away from government, for not taking loans from banks, for not filling subsidy forms, for not wanting to send their children to school and for not going to government dispensaries? Under the circumstances, the poor are being more sensible and practical and definitely showing more wisdom than we credit them with. They see the corruption, feel it every day and keep quiet because no one is prepared to listen to illiterate people: they have no standing in society. They want to read and write but would not want to be educated if this is what education meant.

When we talk of participation, we pre-suppose a condition or an environment of equality of choices, of opportunities, a situation in which there is mutual respect for one another. Instead, we find one side looking down on the other in sheer contempt. The village level government functionary, the rich farmer and exploiter is not willing to be considered an equal, not prepared to share knowledge and skills and experiences as a human being, not open to considering the resources in a village for development purposes. What we call charity and patronage, he calls development. Where is the question of participation?

Government has its own views on participation and development. Voluntary agencies in many parts of the country practise it. But there are voluntary agencies and voluntary agencies. Where participation has been institutionalised, it is artificial but where it has been allowed to grow slowly, gently, naturally and with a great deal of spirit and solidarity, people have known to call it uncharitable names. Participation in development hinges on trust, on decentralising responsibilities, administrative and financial. It presumes the growing importance

we must give to the political process of changing attitudes and opinions and giving people the tools to become effective pressure groups.

The role of voluntary agencies in this case is to provide institutional support, the staying power to sustain people through difficult times and rally around them when the going is rough and where there is general misunderstanding of the aim and purpose of small groups fighting non-violently for causes considered unimportant. It is all very well to talk of participation but we must have a little knowledge and even more practical experience to be able to notice participation when we are in the middle of it. We have not yet developed the tools to identify the process of participation in development and that is why this whole issue is so sensitive. We have not been able to compartmentalise the process and put it in a convenient slot: experts, planners and bureaucrats have been trying for years, but evidently without much success. Where they have been dubiously successful is to create a post for it in the UN: they call the incumbent a Community Participation Officer. To the UN that is a major step forward.

Leave it to the urban experts and this is what happens. At the village level where it counts the problem of participation remains. The involvement of the community in decision-making and in being a party to its own development has become increasingly important because of the growing indifference of the bureaucracy at the lower level to respond to the felt needs of the community. Someone has to test the system from below, some pressure groups have to be created or developed or encouraged to make the system move and some individuals have to be identified who could prod, provoke, activate and possibly initiate the existing structures to change from the grass roots.

This obviously takes time. The pace cannot be forced. It would be absurd to fix targets and conduct ludicrous exercises of time plans. The change that we hope we will be able to notice will be intangible. But if we see a community or a

group growing, always asking questions, not intimidated by the presence of officials and politicians and their members speaking their mind and not prepared to be suppressed or subjected to humiliation of any kind regardless of the caste or class they come from, that is indeed the first sign of participation.

Under the circumstances, the bureaucrat's role is to preserve law and order. But you will notice he goes much further than his brief. If he is mediocre — 90 per cent turn out to be ordinary — he will opt for order even though the law may be on the side of the harijan or the small farmer or the rural artisan. The bureaucrat has scant respect for this whole idea of participation. It undermines his position, threatens his social status and, what's worse, it means losing control over the funds that he could distribute at will without asking questions or even answering them. Since there is no effective system of accountability at the village level, since he has made himself inaccessible to his superiors and inferiors by being his own master and interpreting laws and schemes to his own convenience, he would be the last one to allow himself to be questioned by people he has always considered to be lower than human beings.

When we expect the government to start initiating a process of participation in development, then the trouble starts. Urban trained whizz kid economists seem to forget that there are deliberate built-in obstacles in the bureaucracy that make participation in development a mockery and virtually impossible from within. The development of human resources essential for this sort of participation which we would like to encourage has low priority and the lower one goes in the delivery system, the more of a non-issue it becomes.

Seen from the village level, it is difficult for a variety of reasons.

1. The policy of the government in practice seems to be to make rural communities more dependent rather than independent of the system. Until no-objection certificates are obtained from often corrupt officials, the poor man is consi-

dered guilty and likely to run off with the money. In actual fact, it is the corrupt official who issues the certificate and who indulges in all these practices in the name of the poor.

2. Any mention of social justice or 'equality' in thought and practice is interpreted as impertinence and indiscipline, as not knowing your place, and strong steps are taken by the village level government functionary to suppress/squash it.

3. Policy is less important than personality. The bureaucrat looks for servility, total obedience and no opposition to what he considers right; he is neither civil nor does he think he is a servant. Anyone who talks of participation he considers an enemy and a threat. Whatever the policy may be, he goes entirely by personal impressions and interprets policy accordingly. He is not impartial, objective or non-aligned.

4. The government functionary has not been trained for development work. He is basically a maintenance man/woman supposed to keep the system working. He is not expected to be creative, imaginative and responsive to the felt needs of the poor. He believes more in order than law.

5. Government is convinced that order, discipline and rules can be enforced only if a *distance* is maintained and *barriers* are given respect. The two barriers that keep mediocre civil servants at some distance from the people are qualifications and hierarchies. These barriers give them importance, make them look invincible and allow them a social status of sorts which they crave. Any move to devalue the importance or undermine the necessity of these barriers so that distance is reduced and participation is possible is strongly resented and no explanation is acceptable. The village level functionary will fight tooth and nail to see that distance is preserved and barriers are not broken down.

If the only significant way of getting rural communities and the ultimate beneficiaries to participate is a greater awareness of the need to

develop human resources, how we go about it is the crucial question. Government with its class bias, its fetish for standardisation, its arrogant stand of being the know-all and its paternalistic and impersonal way of going about reaching the poor, is hardly the answer. Alternatives have to be tried and tested and allowed to grow in this democratic society of ours and it is here that the role of voluntary agencies needs to be emphasised. The role is not of middle-man but of midwife.

Government has a lot to learn from voluntary agencies. The hundreds that are working in the rural areas all over the country have shown what results can be produced even under pressure from vested interests, from indifferent village level government functionaries and from unscrupulous politicians. They have shown how new ideas can be tried out with varying degrees of success in spite of such pressures and how the implementation stage can be kept inexpensive, simple and at the same time yield results. The key to success is investment in the human being.

To voluntary agencies, the development of people is more important than the development infrastructures like roads and buildings. Development is the process of changing non-citizens, non-people, completely impoverished, down and out zombies, into human beings who can think and act independently, who are aware of their rights and know where to go when those rights are violated. But they cannot reach this stage on their own. They need to be assisted, they need to be provoked, they need to be supported: the process has to be participatory from the very beginning.

What makes it different from the government approach to development?

1. The development of people cannot be time-bound or target oriented and squeezed in one financial year. It is on-going but there are suitable indicators which mediocre government servants would shudder to accept.

2. The use of village resources, skills, knowledge and experience for

development ensures the maximum participation. Why get it from outside when it is right there in the village. Import substitution is the answer. The doctor, engineer, lawyer, banker, ANM, are basically alien and an imported resource not really interested in participation. In any case, it is a question of overkill. They are not really needed in the strength in which they have been deployed.

3. The mobilisation of financial resources from within the community is one way of promoting dignity, self respect and self reliance in due course. The tendency in government is to dispense charity in the name of development — give everything free — or subsidised.

4. In order to make urban tools, skills and appliances *accessible*, in order to give the human touch, one major role of voluntary agencies is to 'demystify' processes, appliances, technologies and skills. Make them simple, make them replicable, make them inexpensive so that the rural poor are not over-awed, not intimidated and do not consider them as yet other tools for exploitation.

5. Change only comes from conflict of ideas, of attitudes and of approaches in interpretation. Such conflicts at the village level are not only good but desirable and as and when they occur, voluntary agencies use them for human development purposes — to instil confidence, to show that institutional support is forthcoming when needed at critical times, to make it all a learning experience and set an example for others to emulate.

In the ultimate analysis, we have to ask ourselves whether we do want communities to participate in their own development? If it means having to contend with some many critical issues, if it means changing life styles, do we want to upset the cosy arrangements of the status quo as they are?

Participation in development is hardly as easy as it sounds. The tragedy is when participation of the sort we look for and need to encourage is taking place but we cannot recognise it.

Depoliticization

B. P. R. VITHAL

THERE is a general feeling today that the administration has to be depoliticized out of an unstated premise that the administration is expected to be non-political, i.e., politically neutral. The feeling is also based on the assumption that it is politicization that has led to greater corruption on the one hand, and widespread demoralisation on the other, both of which have resulted in a loss of efficiency and, more so, a loss of confidence in the administration on the part of the people at large.

The fact that British administrators in India were generally fair-minded and neutral as between different interests within this country, so long as these did not affect the interests of the British Government, does not mean that they were politically neutral. There may have been different views held by the British Indian administrators about what ought to be the nature and purpose of British rule in India or what would help continue such rule, but that does not change the basic fact that their objective was the continuance of that rule. The situation undoubtedly changed, fundamentally and sharply, with the end of British rule and the political independence of the country.

However, while the ruling power quite obviously changed, it is a moot point whether the ruling class changed equally sharply at this stage, except in cases where the ruling classes were distinctly feudal. Correspondingly, certain feudal attitudes in administration changed to bourgeois attitudes — though this process cannot be said to have been completed even now. However, the motivation of the ruling classes did change genuinely towards

national autonomy in its interests and outlook.

This however did not pose any problem to the civil services because they too were undergoing a similar change and a certain conflict between their perceptions and those of the British rulers had begun to arise at the turn of this century. The Congress that came into power at the time of Independence and the administration then — with the Indian Civil Service (ICS) at its head — could, therefore, adapt to each other with considerable ease. After all, Subhas Chandra Bose had been in the ICS and Nehru could have been had he so wished. The Indian administration was beginning to be 'politicized', in today's terminology, in the last stages of the British rule.

Political activity today, whether in India or in most other countries, is generated by interaction between political parties within a certain socio-economic or class range. It cannot, therefore, be said that a change of a political party in power represents a change in the class base of the State. A feature peculiar to India however is that so far caste has been a more important factor in politics than class, and it has not been possible to equate caste with class, even if some approximate relationships between the two can be established in different regional contexts. Therefore, what affects the administration also in more concrete terms is not merely a change in political parties but a change in the caste composition of the party in power or of its ruling coalition. One of the chief motive forces of the politicization of our administration is, therefore, caste.

The British protected or insulated their own administration from this

A factor to a considerable extent by creating in their civil services a new caste system. The educational system initially decastefied the individual after which he could enter the administrative system at various levels. If he got into the higher civil service, the process was completed by the individual being sent to Britain where he was expected to adopt the mores, manners and outlook of the ruling class as it then was. If he got in at lower levels, the rise through non-gazetted, gazetted and covenanted services provided the bureaucratic counterpart of the social phenomenon of Sanskritisation.

To some extent this process may still be going on insofar as the officer class of the armed forces is concerned. In fact, it is claimed that this is going on when it is said that the members of the officer class of these forces are, at the end of their training, no longer people from one region or from one caste, but are Indians first and Indians last. The fact that these services have still retained the distinction between commissioned officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks shows that a different caste system persists.

In the case of the other services, particularly the higher civil services, the old British process has broken down. The educational system, far from decastefying anyone now, reinforces these distinctions by its system of caste based admissions. This is carried forward into the recruitment to the services. With the administrations now being run on a regional basis, these factors become stronger. Once within the service, the civil servant comes into contact with members of his own caste who have entered the political executive. Ideally, the member of the political executive should owe loyalty to the codes and conventions of his own service. In fact, however, they soon discover that the new loyalties are extremely weak compared to the older loyalties of caste.

In the administration the members of the civil service and those belonging to the political executive are very often thrown together in the task of implementing socio-economic policies, legislation and pro-

grammes, intended to benefit underprivileged castes. In the process of implementation, the politician finds that the caste orientation of the programme helps strengthen his political base. The civil servant, in his turn, discovers that in assisting the politician achieve this objective his own career can be furthered, both because the programme would have been well executed and also because the political executive, whose own ends would have been achieved in the process, has the power to advance his career.

We are here dealing with an activity which in itself may be unexceptionable — the implementation of some social or economic programme which is intended to serve a section of the population or even a caste who deserves such help. If a dynamic official makes a success of it, he cannot be blamed either for his dynamism or for having implemented a programme which is also part of the programme of the party in power. Even normally, such performance would have gone to further his career.

If in the process a politician or political party benefits, this cannot be blamed on the official. If the politician happens to be of the same caste, this again cannot be held against the officer. Similarly, if as a result of such performance the politician rewards such an officer he too cannot be blamed for, after all, he may be only rewarding good performance. In this case caste uplift is the intended and announced policy objective of the programme but it may not provide the nexus between the official and the politician. Nevertheless, to an outside observer this may appear as an example of politicization.

There may however be cases where caste may not only be the objective but may be the motive and the nexus. Such bonds may get further strengthened by the fact that both the politician and the civil servant may themselves have gained admission into their respective hierarchies on the basis of their caste. Even if this is not so, every person who makes good in our society becomes a role-model for his group. Given the complexities of our administra-

tion and its corruption, very often people require a point of entry into the administration for pursuing their own cases. Persons who have made good in life and have entered the administration, either as politician or civil servant, are expected to provide this point of entry for their own group.

All this tends to force a person into the role of an advocate of his own group within the administration. From that to becoming a champion is not a large step, and many are encouraged to take this step by the admiration which they get from their own group when they start discharging this function. This entire process gets accentuated and further strengthened if the official task given to the person happens to be the implementation of a scheme or a law intended to benefit a particular section of the population.

It is the combination of these factors which at every step reinforces original caste loyalties. Such loyalties get built up on psychological factors such as a sense of belonging, sociological factors such as kinship, and economic factors such as rewards and penalties, and protection against outside forces. There are no such forces at work within the administration that either create or reinforce any newer loyalties based on the concept of membership of a particular service or profession.

Corruption is merely an additional factor which may arise in the kinds of situations mentioned above. The implementation of programmes intended to convey benefits to any section of the people naturally provides opportunities for corruption. The implementation of laws which are so idealistic that they do not take into account socio-economic realities in our society or the limitations of the instruments through which they are to be implemented, inevitably leaves considerable discretion to be exercised by the executive, which in turn provides opportunities for corruption. Corruption could be just an additional element detracting partly from the benefit that flows to the beneficiary, but adding considerably to the incentive of the persons responsible for the execution of such a programme.

Once corruption enters the picture one more, and in many cases, a stronger, bond develops between the politician and the civil servant. It provides an additional motive and an additional nexus of its own. The politician may be satisfied only with the political benefit he gets from the implementation of the programme; corruption may be entirely with the civil servant. He may in fact consider this to be his counterpart benefit against the politician's political benefit, or corruption may be an additional incentive for the politician in addition to the political benefit. In the case of the civil servant his quid pro quo would be protection by the political executive from the penal consequences of corruption in case of discovery.

So we have a situation where the civil servant is the instrument of corruption for the politician and the politician is the umbrella of protection for the civil servant. It is a situation into which it is extremely difficult for any third party to break in. Usually such situations are broken into only by another party or faction, of a different caste, coming into power and motivated to subvert or capture the basis built by the faction previously in power. The remedy, therefore, is often applied in such a manner that the mechanism itself is not disturbed since it may be required for the same purpose by the new faction or party.

It is difficult to say whether corruption leads to politicization or politicization leads to corruption. All one can say is that they are mutually supporting phenomena. But, politicization definitely makes the drive against corruption much more difficult because of the protection that the corrupt official gets from politicians either because they are also involved or because of the caste factor.

It is in this broad context that we have to first understand what is meant by the term 'politicization'. Politicization, strictly speaking, should mean that the civil services are ceasing to be politically neutral and are allowing their own political convictions or commitments to interfere with the discharge of their

official duties. In a democratic system of government, civil servants are not prohibited from having their own political convictions or even affiliations, but they are expected to manifest these only in the exercise of their franchise and not in the discharge of their duties. Nevertheless, even in our system of non-political permanent civil services, it is the legitimate duty and responsibility of the civil servants to implement the policies of the political party in power.

Naturally, these policies will be intended *inter alia* to further the political fortunes of the party concerned. This is not an unconstitutional, illegitimate or immoral objective for a political party in a democracy. The seeking of power, or of its continuance, by a political party becomes objectionable in a democracy only when the methods used for this purpose are unconstitutional or legally objectionable. A civil servant cannot, therefore, object to, or obstruct, the implementation of any measures that a political party in power seeks to undertake merely on the ground that they are intended to further the political prospects of the party. His duty is only to examine whether the specific measures proposed are constitutionally and legally valid. He can always express his own opinion about the administrative difficulties or implications of such measures and even about, what he considers to be, their propriety from the administrative or financial point of view. But, if on these issues he is over-ruled, he can have no legal objection.

If at the end of such a process a civil servant implements a programme that is admittedly meant to benefit a particular party politically, is he wrong and is he to be considered to have been politicized? If, on the other hand, he finds in some cases that what the party in power desires is not legally permissible or, in his opinion, administratively feasible, and he expresses this view, is he being obstructive?

The situation is further complicated by the fact that, in most cases, the purpose sought to be achieved and the means of achieving it are not unconstitutional but are merely

illegal under existing laws. Then the question arises that, since we are dealing with a government that is itself the competent authority to change these laws, it is wrong to take problem-solving to the logical end to changing the laws that stand in the way of the action desired? Since we are the law-makers, the law cannot in itself be an obstruction, because if it is such an obstruction then it is for us to change the law to the extent this is possible within the limits of the Constitution. If a keen and efficient officer helps the government by showing legal ways and means of getting round or changing the existing law itself, should he be considered to have been politicized in favour of the party in power? At what point does a professional desire to solve a problem posed before one, become undue enthusiasm? With government intervening in a large area of economic activity, such lines get increasingly blurred and it becomes more and more difficult to decide where the line can be drawn between being obstructive, being constructive or helpful and being enthusiastic.

Politicization arises out of the interaction between the political party and the administrative machinery, but every such interaction is not considered politicization; there are legitimate areas and methods of interaction and there are others which are obviously considered undesirable which come under the term 'politicization'. Horizontally the interactions at the top level will consist of policy guidelines evolved by the party being passed on to the administrative machinery. At other levels it will consist of the party functionaries interacting with the administrative machinery at those levels to ensure the proper implementation of their party programme when they happen to be the party in power, or to protest against the consequences of the programmes of the ruling party if they happen to be in the opposition. The nature of these two interactions will naturally be different.

If the political executive and the administrative hierarchy are two vertical structures, their points of contact would be at levels of the State, the region, the city and the village.

By the political executive we mean representatives of the political party at these various levels, whether by virtue of formal election or by informally accepted leadership at that level, or by appointment by the political apparatus of the party concerned. What is important to bear in mind is that when we are talking of the political executive or its hierarchy we are not talking of the people but the party functionaries at various levels who are deemed to be also 'people's representatives.'

In the British model on which our own model is based, it is assumed that the political party coming to power as a result of the process of elections, takes control of the administrative machinery at the top from where orders are transmitted down the administrative hierarchy. The concept of a non-political civil service means that the administrative hierarchy except at the very top, is responding to a different set of policies and instructions only because it continues to be received in its own hierarchical channel. Its own convictions are a matter of indifference and its relations with the representatives of political parties at its own level are not expected to undergo any change. That is expected to be confined only to the top echelons.

Any attempt on the part of the political executive to exercise authority directly at lower levels is what is called political interference. If the control of the administrative machinery at different levels — directly at that level and not through the administrative machinery — is considered necessary for the proper implementation of the party programmes, such control should be obtained by capturing political power at those various levels simultaneously.

It is in this context that it would be necessary to have elected bodies at various levels, so that economic decision-making is decentralised and the urge of the political parties to control such decision-making at various levels is allowed to express itself through proper institutional channels, rather than through the unauthorised process now called political interference.

Contrary to popular belief, the communist system also has separate political and administrative hierarchies as evident from the fact that not always have the top party and State posts been held by the same person. (It is interesting to note here that this combination of a political and executive post takes place in our system only at the lower level in local self-government where, for instance, the President of a Panchayat would also be its chief executive.) The difference however is that, firstly, since the party in power does not change, many of the issues that other systems have to face when such a change takes place, do not arise and, secondly, the administrative hierarchy is subordinated to the political hierarchy all down the line. We have a third model in the US system in which, whenever the President changes, the composition of the administrative hierarchy also undergoes a change on political lines but only down to a particular level.

A political party acquires State power for the furtherance of its own ideals, ideologies or objectives. Its first task, therefore, is to be able to communicate these objectives to the administration. In the case of parties which have a clear ideology like the communists, or in the case of parties with detailed election manifestos that are meant to be implemented, the problem of communicating these objectives to the administration is simplified.

There may however be parties which have neither an ideology nor a seriously intended election manifesto or platform. The party may be based on mere personalities or images as, for instance, in the USA. There this lacuna is made up by the Presidential candidates having brains-trusts which work out in advance the various measures which will have to be implemented by the administration if that candidate comes to power. In this case a great deal depends upon the members of the brains-trust having a certain insight into the thinking of the candidate himself and great store is also set on empathy with, and personal loyalty to, the candidate.

In our country also, these kinds of situations are arising, but the

advance work is not being done; the result is that the policy guidelines are sought to be evolved after achieving power. One type of politicisation is the result of the higher civil service getting involved in this process. There is no objection to such an involvement if this is what is required by the person returned to power, and if the civil servant objectively examines various alternative policies and their implications and leaves the choice to the political authority. However, there is often a temptation here for the civil servant to aggrandise this opportunity for acquiring a certain degree of personal influence.

The very nature of this task is such that it would be better done by persons who have political commitment and, in the case of 'Image' of 'Leader' politics, by persons who also have strong credentials of loyalty to the leader in question and insight into his ways of thinking. Our administrative system also should, therefore, provide for lateral induction of political administrators or advisers at this level. In the absence of such an arrangement, this role is now being played either by political figures who have no constitutional standing in the administration or by administrators who seek to remain anonymous.

In both cases they escape responsibility for their actions while they continue to exercise considerable power because of the nature of their task. This kind of arrangement which enables exercise of power without corresponding answerability and responsibility will always be unsatisfactory. The spoils system in the U.S. has at least this advantage that those who come under it can be identified and held responsible for the advice they give.

Assuming that the objectives have been spelt out either in the form of an ideology or an election manifesto, or post facto by a group of political or professional persons working with the highest executive, the next task would be to translate these objectives into constitutionally valid and administratively and financially feasible tasks, which can be passed on to the normal administrative machinery for implemen-

tation. Our view of the nature of this task of the bureaucracy derives from the British model on which our own system is based. An opposite approach is however possible if we look at the American model.

In Britain the scope for judicial review of legislation was limited because of the absence of a written Constitution. Legislative control of the executive was also weak because of the executive being able to take a legislative majority for granted; the threat of the fall of the government could silence any dissidence within the ruling party in the legislature. Yet, despite both judicial review and legislative control being weak, the basic premise of the system was that change should be gradual and should not deviate too much from certain unstated, but nevertheless powerful, conventions. In such situations the civil service came to regard itself as the custodian of convention and transmitter of tradition. It subjected the programme of the new party in power to its own scrutiny based on precedent, convention and propriety.

In the American system, however, judicial review was strong because of a written Constitution and the traditions built by the Courts. The legislature also adopted a watchful, and almost aggressive, attitude towards any initiative from the executive. In such a situation, the politically committed executive based on the spoils system, came to represent, not an internal second chamber as in the case of Britain, but an advocate for the party that came into power. It looked upon its task not so much as one of trying to examine the programme of the political party from the point of view of precedent, convention or advisability, but as one of steering the executive's programme through an obstructive legislature and a jealous judiciary.

In our own case we also have a written Constitution and judicial review of legislation has gained in strength over the years. On the other hand, legislative control over the executive has been weak as in the British system. We are, therefore, situated somewhere between these two models and, as such, the role of

the administration cannot be the same as in either of these cases.

It is in this context that one has, perhaps, to conceive of a dual role for the administration at least at the higher levels; one as in the American model — of assisting the political executive in translating its policies into constitutionally and legally acceptable programmes, and the other as in the British model — of cautioning them on grounds of administrative and financial propriety as apart from merely legal or constitutional validity. Given this dual role, the administrative level that serves as a link between the political executive or their advisers and the rest of the administration may have to be filled from the higher bureaucracy, as otherwise they would not have adequate knowledge of administrative procedures etc., to be able to translate political objectives into administrative programmes and they would not also command the respect and elicit the co-operation of the entire administration.

But, if this level is to discharge its other function of steering the programme of the party in power, there would need to be a certain degree of compatibility between the administrator and the politician at this level. We may, therefore, have to have an arrangement whereby the political executive has a choice in making these appointments and the choice is not limited by rigid considerations of seniority.

At the same time, if the purpose for which this arrangement is made, viz., to elicit the co-operation and respect of the administration has to be achieved, there would have to be certain broad constraints on the choice. For example, while the political executive can make a choice, it could be restricted to a particular cadre and a particular range of seniority. Some such procedure has already been followed in the selection of persons to offices such as the chief secretaries of the States and secretaries to the Government of India. What needs to be done to improve the existing situation is to formalise this so that no odium attaches to those who make the selection, to those who are selected and to those who are not selected.

Arrangements of the nature mentioned above would take care only of the top levels of administration where the nature of the political leadership and the quality of the higher services is such that arrangements based on imponderables like conventions will work with reasonable efficiency. This would however not be practicable over a large area of administration, particularly at operational levels, given the various sociological and political factors mentioned earlier. The administration at these levels is beset, on the one side, by demoralisation consequent on politicization and, on the other, by corruption. It is, therefore, not in a position to handle, at these levels, the large amount of discretion and patronage that socio-economic programmes and legislation place in its hands.

The only solution seems to be to place such discretion and operational decisions straight in the hands of the political executive. If you cannot depoliticize the civil servant at any level, politicize the decision making at that level in an open manner by giving it to elected political functionaries. Given the nature of our society and our Constitution this would be better achieved by lateral entry of political functionaries through the process of elections at that level, rather than by direct political appointments from the top political executive as in the case of the spoils system. This would mean that institutions like the local bodies, co-operatives etc., which can cope with economic decision-making and the execution of economic programmes, should be multiplied and strengthened.

This is not to say that these bodies may not themselves be corrupt or inefficient. We can only hope that the democratic process at this level would be able to deal with these problems more effectively than administrative rules and regulations have done so far with corruption and inefficiency among officials. It is also based on the assumption that by taking away some of these functions from petty officials the temptation for political interference at these levels is reduced so that, in respect of the remaining functions and levels at least, a stronger stand

can be taken against politicization and political interference.

On the other hand, the trend so far has been to weaken local bodies and co-operatives, if not to abolish them. One of the ways has been to centralise the recruitment and service conditions ostensibly to protect them from undue interference by the elected officials. The real motive often, however, is that the State Government would like to exercise control over these civil servants, so that they may be used as instruments against the elected officials at the lower level if there is a political conflict between the two levels. What appears to be an attempt at depoliticization may be, therefore, really another kind of politicization.

Similar problems may arise in the case of the all-India services because of their special relationship with the Centre on the one hand and the States on the other, with the Centre playing the same role vis-a-vis these services as the State governments play in relation to local body employees.

In all these cases the good faith of the political party concerned would have to be first proved by its showing that the criteria for politicisation that it wishes to adopt are the same, whether they are dealing with State civil services and the State governments and the central civil services and the Central Government or the all-India services, whether they be working in a State or at the Centre. We cannot demand a particular pattern of behaviour in the name of commitment at one level and consider the same pattern to be politicization if it is shown at a different level or where a different political party is in power.

One solution suggested for achieving depoliticization is that civil servants should be inducted from outside the State concerned, as is already the case for the all-India services. To the extent politicization is based on caste or other factors this solution may be effective. However, caste is only one of the three Cs of politicization, the other two being careerism and corruption. There is no guarantee that a person who comes from outside the region would not, in course of time, be

politicized on the basis of these other considerations. In fact, the immunity he achieves in respect of caste by virtue of coming from outside the region may encourage in him a certain degree of impunity in pursuing the other two objectives. He may be only too willing to identify himself with the powers that be in pursuit of his own career prospects and those powers can accept such attachment with less compunction precisely because they can claim the person to be independent of local influences.

In the case of all-India services there is the further problem that to the extent they are less identified with local interests, they may come to be looked upon even more as federal agents than the dual nature of the all-India services justifies. Even if we assume that induction of civil servants from outside is a solution so far as the States are concerned, it would not apply in the case of the Centre, because the Centre must necessarily get its officials from one region or the other. In this case, it may be said that rotation of officers between the Centre and the States, as is envisaged in the case of the all-India services, may serve a similar purpose. But this is an instrument which can be used both ways, i.e., either for achieving depoliticization or politicization.

Even if there are advantages in the induction of officers from outside the region concerned, there are limits to the extent to which this can be practised. It is possible to do this insofar as the all-India services are concerned because of the nature of those services, but not so in the case of other States and subordinate services. The regional language being the language of administration has become a further barrier to such interchange. Then most administrative functionaries are today in charge of development programmes which require intimate local knowledge and a sense of identification which has positive aspects to it also.

The British Indian administration realised this dual aspect of the problem and sought to solve it by adopting different approaches at different levels. The jurisdiction within which officials would function and would be

transferable was, under the British Indian system, linked to their status and responsibilities so that there were officials who would not go beyond the District, others who would not go beyond the region or division and others who were State-wide.

The higher civil service was of course completely non-local based. In this system, the level which linked the two became crucial because it was Janus-faced; it commanded the loyalty of those below it by being one of them and by long and close association; on the other hand, it was linked to the higher level by strong ties of loyalty inculcated in it by giving it a sense of importance and responsibility which was out of all proportion to its financial or administrative status. In the army we had commissioned officers on the one side and other ranks on the other with the JCOs providing this vital and critical link. In civil administration this link was provided by functionaries like the Tahsildar or the Inspector of Police which explains the awe and prestige that got attached to these posts.

It is a moot point whether the British got the inspiration for such a system from the way the Aryans devised the caste system to perform a somewhat similar function in relation to the aboriginal population, or whether a system independently conceived by the British struck deep and vigorous roots because the existing social structure was conducive to such an arrangement. Whatever that may be, many of these factors, which still persist, set a limit to which induction from outside could be used as a technique for achieving depoliticization.

Even if such induction is done at higher levels as mentioned earlier, the nature of the lower organisation is likely to reduce its effectiveness. Even if a senior officer is free from local influences by virtue of his being inducted from outside, the machinery through which he gets his feedback remains a locally based one which functions according to its own logic and interests. It is also the same machinery through which he has to ensure that his decisions are implemented.

Politicization is a term that has come to be used so often and in so many contexts that in fact it covers different phenomena. There are cases of straightforward collusion between an official and a politician on the basis of different motivations dealt with at length above. When the motive is claimed or conceded to be honest, it is called commitment instead of collusion. Then there are cases which involve propriety such as, for instance, whether an official and a politician should or should not be seen to be openly socialising with each other within the jurisdiction of the official or the political area of the politician.

The motive force for such collusion or undue cooperation may be from the side of the official for furthering his own career, or it may be the result of his yielding to pressures exerted on him by the politician. The pressure in such case would be exerted either through threats of penal action or temptations such as promotions or what are considered 'attractive' transfers or postings etc. Depoliticization, therefore, would require, firstly a definition in concrete terms of what, in different circumstances, would be considered 'politicization.' Based on this a code of conduct would have to be evolved both for the civil servant and the politician. Secondly, institutional arrangements would have to be devised to enforce such a code.

Insofar as the civil servants are concerned, there are already fairly elaborate rules and regulations and explicitly stated conventions which cover all these situations. The problem is that they have all become ineffective because they are not used when needed.

One common example of this is the oft-publicized instruction that Members of the Legislature should not interfere with officials in the discharge of their official duties and that the officials can ignore them if they seek to do so. Any officer who takes this seriously is considered to be either inexperienced or tactless. Very often these regulations are also expected to be used in a differential manner; that is, they are included in

the government's armoury on the unstated assumption that they are not to be used where the ruling party itself is concerned, but are meant to be used only when an official is seen to be yielding to the blandishments of the opposing political party.

The senior officials are expected to develop a certain subtlety in distinguishing cases where the regulations are to be brought out and used and where they are to be conveniently forgotten. The selective use of such instruments is considered a sign of maturity and experience in a senior officer. This again leads to demoralisation and a well-intentioned rule has an effect quite opposite to the original intention. Therefore, what is needed so far as the civil servant is concerned, is to enforce strictly, uniformly and fairly the rules that already exist.

So far as the politicians are concerned, there are no such rules or regulations or even a code governing what ought to be their relations with officials. Therefore, the first requirement is the formulation of such a code. There can be no penal consequences where politicians are concerned. The code can merely indicate what is expected of them in their relations with officials and what they ought or ought not to expect from officials.

A basic rule of such a code should be that the politician should not interfere in cases where officials are being disciplined on grounds of yielding to political interference. The penal sanctions in such a case can be only against the civil servant under his own conduct rules. But, if the provision in the code for the politician is observed to the extent of really ignoring him and thus preventing him from helping the civil servant who may be suffering due to his having yielded to the politician earlier, it will have a salutary effect.

In all these matters the party in power would naturally have to set the initial example because it has the opportunity to show that its intentions are genuine and serious.

There are, however, a large number of cases such as those gov-

erning transfers or postings which do not fall in any clear category. Frequent transfers are considered to be one way of penalising a person for political reasons. Postings, as distinct from promotions, have also become a source of patronage because, for various reasons, posts which ought to be considered equal, have come to be distinguished from each other and there are coveted posts and there are punishment posts. Here, again, there are well-established conventions. The question is only one of using them and not interfering when they are being used.

One solution would be to have a kind of Ombudsman for the services who could *suo motu* ensure the implementation of such codes, once they are evolved and accepted by all, and to whom those aggrieved could appeal for protection. Such an authority would be essentially dealing with grievances, impressions, reputations and the observance of conventions and not with specific rules in any case. Where any specific rule is violated there would be other normal remedies available for redressal. An authority dealing with such matters can, therefore, be effective only if the official constituting it is one who commands respect by virtue of his own seniority, record and reputation for integrity.

But, naturally, the obvious question that would arise at this stage would be the proverbial one of, who is to bell the cat? If politicization of the administration is so acute as to require these new mechanisms, can we at all find within such an administration persons with the objectivity and integrity necessary to make a success of them? It is not as if such persons have totally disappeared; some at least are available. But, will they have the acceptance and the prestige which this arrangement requires? They have been side-stepped and rendered ineffective and their virtues have been made to appear as handicaps.

Do such so-called independent officials of integrity enjoy the respect of their colleagues? Are they any longer the role-models? Or, are they only anachronisms; magnificent

fossils rendered extinct by their inability to adapt to changing circumstances? Can such officers then suddenly exercise an authority whose main source is expected to be their own prestige? Even if they can, will they be allowed to exercise such authority over the commanding heights of the administration, already occupied by those who enjoy the confidence of the political executive, or will they be expected only to arbitrate between the orphans on the fringes of power and patronage?

Further, do the civil services themselves want to be depoliticized? What is the balance of advantage to them? This depends on the existing distribution of spoils; if there is a fair distribution of patronage and corruption they may, indeed, not be serious about depoliticization themselves. These are the legitimate doubts that may arise in regard to the feasibility of the suggestions made above.

The only way such doubts can be set at rest is by the party in power selecting an officer known to have the desired qualities, vesting him with the power to restore morale and not interfering, when such power is exercised even against those known to hitherto enjoy the confidence and patronage of the party in power. But why should political parties want depoliticization? The parties that are not in power will naturally want it because for them depoliticization only means loosening the grip of the ruling party over the administration. It neither indicates nor assures that they would continue to believe in this, if and when they themselves come to power.

But why should a party that is in power show such self-abnegation? Politicians may become *sanyasis*, but a political party cannot become a monastic order. If a political party is, therefore, to take such a step it has to be shown that there is some political logic to it and that some larger political purpose would be served by it. It is not impossible to argue that there is practical political justification for a measure of depoliticization of the administration — a measure only.

One justification would be that public opinion is agitated about the extent of politicization of the administration that has taken place and particularly about its intrusion into areas such as administration of justice and maintenance of law and order. Public opinion can be a confusing and blanket term if the word 'public' is not defined. It may in fact be the opinion of a narrow section of society only; but the term is used here deliberately in that sense. By public opinion we mean opinion that, in the present circumstances, matters in terms of social and political weight, whether this weight may derive from class or education or any other privilege; what matters is that it matters.

It is not as if politicization does not have a functional justification for some sections, at least, of the 'public'. If the administration is not efficient, then politicization, along with corruption, may, in fact, be the lubricant that makes it work. To modify Kingsley Martin, the administration may be such that the tyranny of its inefficiency can be rendered bearable only by its corruption and politicization. The go-getters and the achievers may, therefore, see no reason to object to politicization. But, a majority of public opinion — being the opinion of those who are not sharing in the spin-off — would support depoliticization as an essential pre-requisite for an effective drive against corruption. Politicization is also seen by this section as causing demoralisation in the administration resulting in inefficiency.

To the extent politicization means that the political executive is dealing with different levels of administration cutting across its normal channels of communication, demoralisation occurs among those channels that are short-circuited by such a process. Demoralisation also occurs where politicization results in merit no longer being a criterion for the furtherance of one's career and officials with no political support do not know which way to turn. When constant political change takes place, perspectives become shorter and shorter and risks become greater and greater. The consequent

quick turn-over of the privileged and the orphaned leads to demoralisation.

In such circumstances, making administration non-political, in certain at least of its aspects, would provide that element of stability that may be necessary for service morale and public trust to be restored. There could therefore be considerable popular support for depoliticization which would provide the impetus for political action in this regard.

The Indian situation is not dissimilar to the British situation described earlier, in that we are in a period where any sharp change in the class composition of the ruling class does not seem possible. Yet, the ruling classes do not feel secure because they are not unaware of the fact that they are operating a system which, while it tides over the immediate problems, nevertheless releases social forces which, if not dealt with in time, may have far-reaching consequences for themselves. This is, therefore, a period where the ruling class would have within itself sharply differing views on where its own interests lie and what should be the strategies to be adopted to protect such interests. The considerable political activity one sees is a reflection of this ferment within this class. It is precisely when there is a great deal of political activity of this type, that one looks for a so-called non-political administrative machinery for holding a balance between different views and providing stability for the ruling classes, while a long-term strategy for survival is being worked out.

The desire for depoliticizing the administration is, therefore, quite wide-spread. It does not represent a confidence in the administrator as against the politician. It is merely an acknowledgment of two different roles for these two functionaries. We do not want a politician who is only a good administrator nor an official who is a shrewd politician. What is needed, to satisfy this desire, is to have the courage to recognise the factors responsible for this phenomenon and the ingenuity to devise institutions that will be able to deal with such factors.

Spying and public services

JAGAT MEHTA

THE purloining of classified government documents and making them available in return for small pecuniary rewards of bottles of Scotch and other lures has been and must be unreservedly condemned. Following the arrests, the investigations now underway will reveal the magnitude of the damage and whether those involved were motivated by deliberate anti-national attitudes or were yielding to the temptation of supplementary earnings offered by some Indian businessmen, to get competitive commercial advantage in supply bids. That will take its time and no doubt established guilt will invite punishment to fit the crime.

Meanwhile, reports in the Indian press following the disclosure have created a scare which could undermine the confidence within and towards the whole fabric of government. Some comments bordered on self-confessed slander of the national character as if Indian citizens are peculiarly prone to hawking national interests any time and anywhere for a handful of silver. It has even been suggested that Indians still betray the coolie mentality — servile compliance to oblige any foreigner. A nation where over two crores have shown interest in choosing their own rulers, is proof of

maturity, discretion, patriotism and inner strength.

Neither the facts revealed in this case or others in the past warrant such masochism and national self-degradation. No official involved in advice or decision-making seems to be suspected but a score of junior officials who handle papers along the transmission belt moving between offices, have been apprehended. The long and distinguished career of several senior officers need not have been smeared.

In retrospect, they could have been accused of not exercising greater vigilance but senior officers such as a Principal Secretary or other secretaries have burdens other than to act as counter-intelligence hawks all day and be effective in the evenings too. As against one M.O. Mathai who some say may have leaked information to the C.I.A., there was Seshan who handled the same sensitive documents for an even longer duration under Jawaharlal Nehru. Seshan was eased out of the Prime Minister's Office and subsequently sent to a mission abroad but he never allowed any temptation to warp his integrity and values.

Thousands of civil, military and foreign service officials have never

betrayed the trust expected of public servants even after retirement. The pall of suspicion raised by the government and thickened by some in the media may well lead to a paralysis in decision-making by abstinence — and that too when deliberate efforts are being made to restore the flagging courage in offering honest counsel. A government with democratic legitimacy needs self-confident, purposeful public servants.

On the basis of this and similar incidents which reflect degenerating standards of integrity, one must not unwittingly argue in a way which could lead to a clamping down on all non-official contacts or end up in an atmosphere where every one suspects his colleague to be an informer. That would jeopardise democracy and hamstring purposeful administration and effective diplomacy. More sober reflections are called for in the public debate.

Spying — infiltration into another country's security shield by surreptitious means — is as old as the Trojan horse and, indeed, must be older. Diplomacy in formal pretensions is based on the assurance — reiterated in the credentials presented by every incoming ambassador to the host head of State, be it in a country which is genuinely friendly or a potential enemy — of promoting friendly relations between the two countries. But the temptation is too great to resist taking advantage of immunities which by tradition and agreed convention are reciprocally provided to diplomatic missions not to embark on covert intelligence and at times even interference in internal affairs of the diplomatic partner nation.

There are generally two kinds of diplomats in any mission and some straddling the two groups. There are those responsible to respective Foreign Offices who go about gathering information and making assessments of political and even security relevance by open means and through official contacts; there are others responsible to national intelligence agencies using unorthodox methods who take greater risks in gathering information. The military attaches with exclusive concern for

the military capabilities and potential of a country (and who hold only one or two assignments in diplomatic missions in their career) may use open means but may also resort to more questionable methods to fulfil their briefs.

In any case, no ambassador wants any of his subordinates, whatsoever their parent affiliation, to be caught in surreptitious activities. Sometimes he does not know and even does not wish to know what means his in-house 'spooks' employ to bypass the ring of official security to pursue their particular scent. Intelligence agents by their very rationale are tempted to abuse the latitude of discretion for their own non-diplomatic ends using undiplomatic means. However, while exploiting the protection of their diplomatic status, those violating the norms are all but prepared for being summarily expelled as *persona non grata* should they be detected.

All too frequently we read of 'diplomats' being caught and made to withdraw from one country, followed by a prompt denial and a quick retaliation with or without adequate grounds by the other country. However, after a day or two in the headlines, the incident is virtually forgotten. Once in a while a big network is notified as having been unearthed and a bigger fuss is made. Britain once dramatically expelled a hundred, and France a dozen or so Russians. But after a gap the normal pattern of trade promotion and exploring positive and mutually beneficial interests was resumed. It is just as well that despite the suspected involvement of a French military attaché, relations with France are not being down-graded.

Regardless of the ethics of spying, the game of cops and robbers goes on in the sedate profession of diplomacy. Depending on a country's security stakes and capacities, almost every country is probing by not-so-open means the secrets of another country. The resources expended by the nations on intelligence gathering must amount to billions of dollars every year. The most sophisticated equipment and hardware are made available. Despite all this, the results are often meagre and frequ-

ently only a duplication or confirmation of information otherwise publicly known. Be that as it may, spying and counter spying will continue. One side benefit is that good spy fiction like that of Le Carre remains almost the shortest route to becoming a millionaire.

What is new in this old game is that beyond military secrets there is now concentration on technological espionage and intelligence for trade promotion. Ferreting out information for commercial opportunities, using all the tricks of the trade like corruption and stealth, goes on even between military allies. Espionage activities have been unearthed and, what is more, publicised even amongst friends as close as the United States and Japan. As the world becomes more inextricably interdependent and yet remains painfully divided, and with competition to advance national economic priorities, commercial and technological espionage may grow even faster than military espionage.

Our present scandal exposes the trend towards hyper-inflation in classifying papers and the failure periodically to down-grade out-worn secrets. But the complex nature of a modern government's responsibilities inevitably requires wider consultation and distribution even of the most sensitive documents. The xerox machine is the biggest enemy of paper security. It is a far cry from one man, perhaps a monarch or a Bismark, keeping a parchment manuscript locked in a safe in his bedroom closet and manipulating internal and external politics. The Pentagon papers (involving thousands of pages) were stolen and duplicated by radical idealist undergraduates, apparently in one evening.

The inability of governments to guard secrets is a universal and baffling phenomenon of our times. There have been innumerable cases where secrets kept by a government from its own people are publicised by a presumed adversary. Arms purchases and trade can be detected not just in the recipient country but at many points such as that of the actual manufacturers, the loading and unloading ports and even by

checking manifests at intermediate halts of ships carrying arms. One salutary point to remember is that military deployment of weapons and forces cannot be concealed from surveillance from outer space. President Eisenhower (a former general at that) came to grasp the sophistication of modern aerial photography and its military uses when a shot taken at 80,000 feet showed him wielding his golf club, and almost betraying the make of the ball which was in flight. Electronic monitoring can enable eaves-dropping on the most private of conversations.

There is, however, incidental benefit in the near impossibility of protecting the highest military secrets. The mutual capabilities of verification without ground level intrusion is the heart of the hope for arms control between the super powers and the avoidance of nuclear destruction of the whole world. This does not mean that real secrets should not be guarded but that the discovery of a spy operation on the ground need not lead to a paroxysm of nervousness.

Beyond all this, it should be remembered that the democratic system is a sort of social contract in which various constituent elements are locked in battle. On the one side are official efforts to deny controlled information and on the other is the public right to know and probe them. The government with its responsibilities must guard secrets, while Parliament and the media representing the people are continuously engaged in finding out the pulls and pressures behind public policies. The democratic State which symbolises legitimacy and continuity rests on the premise that the official and non-official world share a common loyalty to the nation. There is no justification for the implied arrogance of higher patriotism of some with a generalised disdain towards public servants who carry difficult burdens with no defence against innuendos and unwarranted suspicions. In a police State, the official would be supreme and Parliament and the press would have to be content with anodyne hand-outs and evasive answers to questions.

In the present case, apparently low grade officials — and all of them Indians — were the instrument for stealing and transmitting classified information to interested foreign governments. (In the Larkin case foreigners were in direct touch with officers who themselves were in the know). If, however, paranoia is carried to its logical conclusion, then either every official who at one time or the other had access to State secrets would have to be shadowed at home and abroad or confined to detention in a non-religious ashram for many years until the archives were opened to scrutiny. (In our case it is thirty years.)

The most famous or infamous double agent of these decades was Kim Philby. For a while he used his position of foreign correspondent as a cover for spying for the U.S.S.R. On the other hand, journalists are known to have worked for their own country's intelligence agencies and considered it a kind of patriotic duty. Some were lured or trapped by the host country's security or intelligence agencies to become agents. In our own country, week after week, newspaper columnists reveal that they are privy to decisions taken or still on the anvil, but not intended to be divulged. Sometimes the plans for purchase of defence equipment are prematurely disclosed. It is, in fact, widely believed in diplomatic circles, not just in Washington but even in Delhi, that journalists often know more than any official or even Cabinet Minister, outside their own field of responsibility. No wonder, journalists are the more frequent guests of accredited ambassadors than are officials. But there is no reason to apprehend that such contacts with diplomats are necessarily sinister, servile or hazardous.

Secrets, of course, can be milched in a garden, a shop, an apartment, on an air-flight or in a thousand places where one may rub shoulders with strangers. On the other hand, secrets may not be divulged by a national journalist in the face of inducements or a paid visit as guest of a foreign government. It would be absurd to think, that because of Kim Philby and his ilk, every correspondent was a potential traitor.

Effective diplomacy has also to be a blend of secrecy and confidence-sharing in advancing national purposes. The exclusive bilateral hotline between the US/USSR is the symbol of timely confidentiality. The developing open confrontation between the super powers at the time of the Cuban missile crisis might have been more difficult to diffuse without highly parallel secret diplomacy. The Wilsonian prescription of 'open covenants openly arrived' was appealing idealism but in a world where conflict and suspicion have not been eradicated, the formula was flawed in the understanding of the role and methods of diplomatic intercourse.

In diplomatic dealings, as in a democracy, some information, which at least for a while is not only denied to other States but also to the people at large, is a part of the instrument of diplomatic persuasion. Even though much of diplomacy today involves public relations and stating national positions in international conferences, the real art and craft of diplomacy demands the mix of guarding national secrets and simultaneously enlarging the margin of confidence with a foreign government. Here, too, it might as well be acknowledged that some betrayals and indiscretions are inevitable. The highest diplomat to defect was the senior-most Soviet official deputed to the UN Secretariat. He is now revealing all in a book published perhaps with CIA encouragement in the United States. But because officials will invariably meet other foreigners or intelligence agents, are we to stop officials, present or retired, to take up appointments with international organisations or serve on Executive Boards or on Commissions of the UN or even attend conferences?

In practice, it is well to remember that the real secrets are not on paper but in the minds of men. The only real guardian is the sense of discretion, which comes from basic loyalty reinforced by experience of a higher responsibility. Unless all officers—these officials must number tens of thousands—are kept incommunicado, physical security can never be guaranteed against the hy-

pothetical possibility of betrayal by insisting on the use of steel almirahs, sealed covers and the fullest paraphernalia of security precautions. In fact, in comparison with other countries, India has had a very credit-worthy record. We have had no defections and no known double agents. In important conflicts and the Pokharan explosion, we maintained surprise, and in negotiations the reserve, necessary for fruitful compromises. We are informed that in this case no military plans have leaked. By and large Indian diplomats, at least in comparison, are considered vigorous, vigilant and discreet. India has not been obliged to expose the past to get endorsement of new policies like the post-Cultural Revolution leadership did in China about the Gang of Four or as Khrushchev did regarding the Stalin period.

Incidentally, revelations about the past are only technically sensitive secrets in the present. Memoirs of our politicians and officials or even official biographies like that of Jawaharlal Nehru draw on what is otherwise still classified but is no longer sensitive today. Such information provides fresh insights and is the warp and woof of history. No country exposes itself and so much, specially after a change of administration, as the Americans do. Former officials embark on writing their memoirs almost the day they demit public office. They write freely even about their colleagues and shamelessly disregard the embarrassment they cause to diplomatic partners and the allies of the United States.

Under the Freedom of Information Act any individual can ask for classified information about himself. If not all papers, a large part of Presidential libraries are open to researchers. This is more far-reaching than what Escott Reed, a former Canadian High Commissioner to India, describes of the intra-personal friction of decision makers 30 years ago. When such high officials shared their likes and dislikes with a foreign envoy, they showed bad taste but this is not the same thing as jeopardising national security. It is ludicrous to advance this as proof of servility in the national character of Indians.

Let us, therefore, keep our cool. In the wake of one scandal let us not indulge in national flagellation and create an alarm that no normal secrets are safe in the hands and minds of Indian public servants. Democracies by definition abhor and reject the obsession of privileged secrecy in the hands of the government which pervades authoritarian regimes. It does and must permit debates and dialogues with scholars, journalists and non-officials. Let us also remain self-confident that, in the long run, democracy ensures better security health. It can summon the resolve to meet the threats and paranoia of non-participatory political systems.

In this case the misguided purveying of documents for monetary gain was born in an atmosphere of permissive corruption, inflationary economic pressures on the official class, and the devaluation of integrity and honesty in public life generally. More effective control of leakages of classified papers, or by word of mouth, will come with the easing, if not ending, of the corrosion of cynicism. There must be a more transparent adherence to the fundamental formula of good management, a reward for the able, the honest and the earnest and, simultaneously, a ceiling on advancement of the indolent or the incompetent. But, above all, there must be recognition that a career in public service must have some co-relation, if not equality, with comparable earnings and facilities (housing, transportation, margin for education) as in the non-official sector. Vigilance by the internal security system must not create an atmosphere of a gestapo lurking with traps for the many innocent because of the dereliction of the few.

There should, of course, be heightened vigilance by the appropriate agencies against transgression and those falling for inducements must get their desserts. But let us remember that in a democracy a public servant, like the citizen, is presumed to be true to himself and that means accepting his uncoerced dedication to the country to which he belongs. If he does not get that trust, undetected he will opt out of commitment to the public weal.

Computer crime

T. ANANTACHARI

SCIENTIFIC and technological revolutions have brought about qualitative and far reaching changes in the realm of crime. Gone are the days when invariably a dwelling house or a place of habitation was the target. The Industrial Revolution and the discovery of gun powder (and all that accompanied it), gave an extra dimension to crime. It not only enhanced the muscle or striking power of the criminal but ultimately resulted in drawing crime to the streets. This in turn led to organised gangs and an ever increasing dose of violence.

The widespread use of the railways and other modes of transport saw the emergence of fleeting criminals for whom the innocent and unsuspecting traveller carrying money and merchandise, besides costly ornaments, became an easy and wholesome prey. When the traditional habit of keeping money at home gave place to depositing the same in the banks, the latter became the preferred and worthwhile target. The criminal was no doubt always ahead of his victims as well as the law enforcement agencies.

Gradually, 'technological man' was confronted by the 'technological criminal'. This, in turn, necessitated the police to lean on technological aids to meet the new and emerging challenges. The result was that the police all over the world increasingly

took the help of forensic science and other technical aids. Forensic laboratories sprang up and soon forensic scientists became part and parcel of police investigation.

The advent of the computer has brought yet new and sensitive issues to the fore, as well as bringing in its wake the 'third wave' society. Like many important and vital segments of society, the field of crime has also been influenced by the advances in the realm of computers. Like his counterparts in the agricultural and industrial revolution phases of human evolution, the present day criminal is fast making full use of computers for criminal activities.

The trend set by the computer criminal may have very little in common with the traditional forms of crimes hitherto known. The computer criminal is breaking new and unknown ground causing a sea-change in terms of content and methodology, with the result that a police investigator may soon find that his traditional approach to investigation may be inadequate and fall far short of actual needs. Investigation of a computer crime will demand considerable insight into the various facets of computer operations, besides evolving new and appropriate procedures to meet exacting standards of legal proof. Thus, in one go, the computer criminal has made the traditional modus operandi considerations somewhat

archaic and the existing system of proof inadequate and irrelevant.

In this article an attempt has been made to have a brief look at some of these newly emerging problems and to offer broad guidelines for the investigators who may soon be in the thick of investigating computer crimes.

It is not easy to arrive at a commonly acceptable definition of 'computer crime'. One of the broad based definitions which seems to reflect practical needs is 'the use of a computer to perpetrate any scheme to defraud others of funds, services and property'. The definition will not be complete unless it includes 'invasion of privacy' also. Putting to use a computer to create false assets, manipulate price of stock, to provide material information to those who have no legitimate right or need to know the same, are some of the better known examples of computer crime. In India, there have been a few cases of frauds in banks, manipulation of examination results, etc., in which the computer has figured. If we surveyed the wide-ranging types of computer crimes reported elsewhere in the world, it would not take much effort to realise the all pervasive operational nature of the computer criminal.

Computer criminals are known to be involved with equal facility in a wide range of crimes — from white collar ones to organised crimes and to intelligence (and espionage) activities. Small groups of terrorists are known to have had access to large arsenals through computer manipulation. In yet another instance, railway wagons were diverted to places of convenience before successfully taking away the contents unauthorisedly.

The frightening accounts of computer misuse to blackmail adversaries and sustain oneself in power, referred to in detail in the famous novel, *The R-Document*, is no more a mere figment of the imagination. Numerous cases have come to notice in different countries where personal data held on the computer have been misused to deprive individuals of credit facility, police clearance, etc. In one of the recent

elections in the U.S.A., an attempt was made to get at the medical reports of a presidential candidate to discredit him at the polls — all with the help of computer-held information. Such cases make one wonder if computer crimes can be and should be covered by the commonly accepted definition and content of 'crime'.

The advent of the computer will bring in its wake a new range of crimes hitherto unknown, depending upon the field pertaining to which, and the type of data held, by the computer. Hence the need to have a deep, detailed and careful look at this matter. New crimes may have to be brought on to the statute, existing definitions may have to be replaced, modified and/or enlarged. In India manifold increase in the use of computers, including in some vital sectors of public administration, offers considerable scope for computer crimes. Soon, there will be tantalising criminal reports involving computers and police investigators will have to be fully prepared and equipped to handle such cases.

Computer crimes may be classified as follows:

(a) *Property offences* — This involves theft of property or goods with the help of a computer. There have been instances of wrongful gain/or wrongful loss when an organisation's computer has been used to obtain goods and to be delivered at places unconnected with the organisation.

(b) *Theft of services* — This involves the use of someone else's computer to obtain payments for services either not rendered or rendered by someone else. There are instances in which illegal use of someone else's computer is made to run personal ventures, including those by employees of computer firms.

(c) *Embezzlement*

(i) This form of crime has come to notice more than others. It is also among the far more serious crimes which have been committed by using computers.

(ii) In recent times, one such case of a sensational nature was repor-

ted by a bank in India. In cases like this the computer is manipulated regularly to credit amounts unobtrusively to a ghost account. The money is withdrawn at will and it would be quite some time before such illegal transactions surfaced.

(iii) There have been a few cases where individuals have gained substantially by appropriating to themselves 'rounded off' values through computer manipulations. By careful incorporations in the software, persons have ensured that no entries are made in their account of withdrawals and debits. There is practically no limit to such violations if careful monitoring of computer programmes and also stages of computer operations, is not ensured.

(iv) Computers are known to have been used for perpetrating complex and sophisticated financial swindles, by creating false assets, painting false and exaggerated pictures of firms, etc. Computer frauds under this head include acquisition of companies by projecting misleading computerised financial reports, etc.

(d) *Data crimes* (i) These involve theft of information. The various stages of computer processing offer considerable scope for this form of crime, e.g., at the stage of data preparation, conversion processing, retrieval etc. In short, all stages of computer operations offer a lot of scope for data crimes. If this form of crime is to be contained, all computer users and managers have to pay special attention to the many stages of computer operations and build in fool-proof security arrangements — physical, hardware and software.

(ii) Broadly speaking, data crimes are in the nature of 'thefts' of information. Computer operators and managers, police investigators and legal experts, including judges, have to apply their minds jointly to the operation. Usually data crime takes the shape of

- (a) theft of source data,
- (b) theft of input data,
- (c) theft of output data,
- (d) theft by interception.

(iii) While the last one would involve technological or electronic

interception of data in the course of transmission or reception, others can be carried out by the more physical copying process and the usual methods of stealing print-outs, computer programmes and other connected materials.

There will have to be a qualitative difference in the approach to prevention and detection of data crimes involving interception because this would necessarily involve newer methods, if necessary, based on technology and newer concepts, procedures and proof. In this area particularly, the computer expert will have to play an important role in prevention and detection. In most of the cases, investigation may be beyond the capabilities of an ordinary police investigator and, therefore, a computer expert may have to be closely associated with the whole process of investigation and detection.

It would be easy to understand from the above that computers offer considerable scope for highly sophisticated and complex crimes. This, in turn, may lead to the evolution of organised crime of an altogether new complexion and dimension. Unless determined and persistent efforts are made to study this problem, not only by police professionals but also by computer experts, we are not likely to comprehend the magnitude of the criminal developments in this area till one day events suddenly overtake all of us by surprise.

There are numerous problems which an investigator may face while handling a computer crime. A reference has already been made to the decreasing relevance of the *modus operandi* as the basis of investigation in the context of computer crimes. Because of the facility of remote terminal operations, combined with the capacity to manipulate very large sized and complex data-banks and data-bases, it is possible for individuals to get at large volumes of data at the press of a button from a point far removed from the computer which holds the data. This makes the location and identification of the criminal very difficult. The process of investigation is bound to be time-consuming, which would adversely and severely affect chances of detec-

tion. For this, as well as reasons of anonymity of the criminal, it may be quite some time before the crime itself comes to light. This will further reduce the chances of detection.

Investigating a computer crime may not always be possible unless the investigator has a sound knowledge of computer hardware, software and procedures. Therefore, soon there will be need for specialist investigators to handle computer crimes.

Not much thought has been given to the legal aspects of computer crimes. May be, it is necessary to have a separate and specific legislation in regard to computer crime so that it may be possible, wherever required, to work in conjunction with existing laws — to cite one example, direct or indirect access to any computer by an unauthorised person. Problems of privacy will figure prominently when one goes into the details of computer crimes. All these will raise a whole series of issues relating to definition of crime, laws of evidence, proof, etc. It is imperative, therefore, that a beginning be made.

Even as we consider the intricacies of investigating and detecting a computer crime, it is prudent that we devise ways and means of preventing it. This is not merely an urgent need. In fact, it is a matter of basic social obligation. Computers have come to stay and they will be increasingly utilised to cover a wide range of human activity. Whether one likes it or not, data regarding a large number of citizens relating to a range of aspects will find their way into computers — most often without the individual being aware of what type of data is being held about him on the computer. This raises the scope for misuse and criminal manipulations and, therefore, puts extra burden and responsibility on computer owners and operators to ensure security and secrecy. This area, like the legal aspects referred to above, needs very careful and early attention. I do not think this matter can brook any further delay.

Policemen themselves will not be able to handle all problems arising

out of different types of computer crimes. It is envisaged that there will be a wider role for the computer professionals not only in investigation and detection of cases but also in working out fool-proof preventive measures. To this extent, the computer expert has a greater responsibility than a forensic scientist and other technical groups which may help the police in the investigation of criminal cases. In view of this, it is imperative that a close working relationship be evolved between the professional groups comprising police investigators and computer experts.

The traditional theories of criminology and, therefore, their relevance to prevention and detection of crime, will have to be given a fresh look, thanks to the advent of the computer criminal. After all, this category of criminal does not belong to the slum. He is almost invariably well educated, has a standing in society, and is well remunerated. He is a criminal of distinction even when compared to his white collar brethren. Criminologists are, therefore, expected to study this socio-techno-criminal development in all its perspectives.

In the course of this article an attempt has been made to draw attention to the need for legal changes to meet the problems faced in dealing with computer crimes. In this the legal experts will have to come out with appropriate modifications to the existing statute and wherever necessary formulate new ones. Unless this is done urgently, prevention and detection of computer crimes may not be very successful.

The scope for and range of computer crime being almost unlimited, a day will come when each section of the society will become the possible target of the computer criminal. It is, therefore, imperative that efforts are made to create widespread awareness among the public so that the scope for the criminal use of the computer is limited to the minimum, if not fully ruled out, and the required legal changes are brought about to keep pace with the requirements of investigation and prosecution of computer crimes.

Violence

SRI MADHAV A'SHISH

YES. About the riots. It was madness, a madness of the worse than animal brutality that lurks beneath the civilised facade of almost every human being. This brute beneath the surface is something one has to come to terms with in oneself if one is to find any understanding of, and so compassion for, the people whom it overwhelms. Compassion does not mean approval, nor does it mean getting sentimental over the poor things, any more than one gets sentimental over a mad dog.

This innate savagery is the reason for the attention paid to the education of children, which attempts to canalise it into socially acceptable channels. Violence has to be let out and; if possible, turned to constructive purposes. In rough sports, hunting, and games, we teach them to go by the rules, to manifest only controlled violence. Punishment, corporal or otherwise, is part of the process by which kids are taught to fear the consequences of uncontrol-

led violence or other antisocial behaviour. And it isn't just boys. Girls and women can be just as bad, if not worse. Consider the Bacchae, and Kipling's 'When you're wounded and lie on Afghanistan's plains/ and the women come out to cut up what remains...' Ma—Yashoda Mai — said that women's capacity for violence was the reason for keeping them away from sights of brutality, which might bring it to the surface. As for boys, remember *The Lord of the Flies*.

But social conditioning does not eradicate the savagery. It only pushes it more or less deeply below the surface. Few people progress beyond the conditioning and make a conscious decision to be human. The rest are controlled by deeply conditioned fear of the force of law and of social censure.

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RETAIL AND EXPORT OF HOME FURNISHINGS

social beings out of savage infants. It appears to be the only known way. Twentieth century experiments in child rearing, mostly based on reactions against memories of traumatic disciplines, have swung into their opposites — equally traumatic lack of discipline — and resulted in generations of undisciplined slobbs. But these educational deviations hardly account for the characters of people who went wild in the recent riots. One has to look further.

In the Indian village setting, social restraints depended on the maintenance of the social fabric. In the northern belt, certainly, there was much violence. Apart from sporadic wars, there was (and is) the brutality of the landlord towards his tenants and there was much inter-caste and inter-community violence. Reasoned agreement was for peers, and for others so long as they kept within the accepted order — an order which assumed on inherent inequalities between castes.

The developments of the last century, and particularly of the last thirty-five years, have attacked the economic base of the social fabric — overcrowding, land shortage, the money economy, politicisation. The people have become sophisticated, in the root sense of the word 'spoiled', particularly the village people who have either left their villages for the towns, or whose villages have been included in the town spread. So long as they do not feel threatened, they can be as decent as anyone. But what has happened is that the socially conditioned barriers to violence, which were not particularly strong, have been eroded. Personal or community displays of violence, which were previously censured or even repressed by superior force are no longer punished. The political party goondas exploit the capacity for violence and protect the people who do it. From being something shameful, violence has become an approved, money-making activity.

The violence of military wars and the force used by the police were held within the confines of discipline. Trained men in uniform were

supposed to limit their violence to attacks on other men in uniform, and the police were supposed to use physical force only against individuals who refused to submit to the authority of law. We have heard how Indian farmers could continue ploughing even in the course of a battle fought over their land. The concept of total war has destroyed this, reverting us to the behaviour of primitive war in which the enemy was, by definition, the occupant of the land invaded. The police have become the instruments of the very politicians who use violence to terrorise their opponents and the social groups who support them.

One has to look further still into the forces which bring man's innate violence to the surface. Neither animals nor men are violent without reason: they become violent under circumstances which appear to threaten their well-being or security. Inequity and injustice derive from actual or felt deprivation of well-being. And deprivation breeds frustration and resentment. The current socio-economic order is based on the unequal distribution of social benefits. When it started, the general benefits which seemed to be promised by the free play of personal ambition appeared to justify the inequality. There seemed to be unlimited scope for the accumulation of wealth, particularly for the people who would work hard. But the shadow side to the system has caught up.

The term 'the rat race' is an indicator of the change in people's attitude towards what used to be thought the glories of a successful career. On top of this is a growing feeling that the material and psychological prizes of success are not all that satisfying. In overcrowded India, of the 700 millions perhaps 20 per cent are in a position to enjoy some of the fruits of economic success, and of this 20 per cent perhaps 5 per cent can reach the living standard equated with success. Frustration is the inevitable consequence for the majority. It amounts to a very powerful force.

This is much the same as the force communism exploited to

achieve the Russian revolution, just as the Congi and others seek to exploit it for their purposes. But when this is done, it implies approval of the very sorts of behaviour previously disapproved of. And because it was previously repressed, people had been given no opportunity to learn the art of controlled violence. When the barrier is broken, everything comes out. It is a dangerous game to play. If frustration is exploited, the violence that springs from it can be controlled only by more violence. Indeed, the repressive measures of the present Soviet State can be seen as an inevitable consequence to the violence by which the State was established.

The barriers to violence can hold only so long as people agree to be reasonable. Reasonableness means that one is ready to take others' views and needs into consideration, an acceptance of the fact that many minds and many viewpoints are needed to assess the realities of any situation and to decide on appropriate courses of action. When the genuine needs of others are ignored, when the 'talking shop' becomes merely a facade of reasonableness to cover raw power lust, then dissenters must either put up with their frustration, or they must resort to force and violence.

The Indian situation has become one in which violence is the only weapon against the power-elite who refuse to listen to reason. But the frustration, the fuel of violence, has been exploited by both the government and the opposition, both of them claiming outbreaks of violence to be spontaneous demonstrations of feeling in their favour, and both resorting to rabble-rousing. But the poverty of education and information leaves 'the rabble' without the guidance of its own mind, and therefore leaves it vulnerable to exploitation. It knows only that it is angry, frustrated.

Even the law recognises the justice in spontaneous outbursts of violence under extreme provocation. This is partly because it is recognised that spontaneous outbursts in an individual or in a group do not necessarily mean that the socially conditioned

barriers to violence have been permanently eroded or broken. However, group outbursts are always more dangerous than individual ones, because the violence of each individual in the group reinforces the violence in others. This is particularly the case in people whose behaviour is controlled more by the norms of social groups than by an internalised system of values. When the social fabric has been unravelled by the changes of the times, then, if the group's frustration is exploited by rabble-rousers, out comes the now uninhibited brutality of the animal man. It is not the controlled violence of the man who, even in anger, is restrained by a sense of propriety, but is utterly uncontrolled beastliness.

People rightly complain that violence shown on films and television produces violence in real life. What they fail to take into account is that such programmes represent collective fantasy—what people in general are ready to indulge in in their private fantasies—vicarious, compensatory. Under the influence of unrecognised psychological reactions to their felt frustrations, they dream of reaching goals through violence which are denied to them in practice. And because those goals are unobtainable, they want to destroy the people who symbolise them.

Since very ancient times it has been known or felt that one answer to the violence natural to youths and to the frustrations of a repressed population is to provide substitute targets—an enemy beyond the State boundaries (Pakistan), a community within the State (Hitler and the Jews). And sometimes the people find themselves a substitute (Hindus and Muslims).

Under these circumstances, the enemy ceases to be seen as human. He becomes a 'thing', a symbol of all that is hated. People are not content to kill him. They want to pound him to pulp, burn him alive, tear him limb from limb. They even get a wildly erotic satisfaction from such destruction, the frustrations of sex being added to the other frustrations. As C.G. Jung said, people who decry the intellect lay themselves open to

the charge of not understanding the forces against which this powerful tool was constructed.

What is the answer? Rational government by people who are actually concerned with the welfare of the majority of the people, who are aware that State control can never substitute for the self-control of the individual, and who are aware that man's inherent capacity for violence must, when necessary, be controlled only by disciplined force in a manner acceptable to the majority.

Rational government effectively begins in the home and in schools where children first learn to submit to discipline in the interests of order, whether they understand the reasons or not, and they then learn the reasons why greedy self-interest must, in the long run, lead to chaos and self-destruction.

Unhappily, one has to bring in the analogy of the plague of rats: the causes have to be removed, but this does not mean that the existing rats do not have to be dealt with. If one merely kills off the rats, new ones will breed in the sewers. If one does not kill them off, disease may spread uncontrollably before there has been time to remove the causes.

The sort of shock which thinking people in the country have suffered from the recent riots can be of enormous value, for it not only makes them question the values on which their society is based and the sort of government they have supported, but also makes them receptive to new ideas. Even on the level of the organic cell, if one wants to make it absorb a substance to which it is normally resistant, a shock will make it receptive. But we are deprived of the mass media by which advantage could have been taken of the shock. And so we remain frustrated, daily expecting fresh outbursts of violence from the same causes.

The frustration of knowing what could be done, but being unable to do it, is almost worse than the despair of not knowing. Mitigation of the despair lies in knowing that 'statistical' man does eventually learn by experience, the hard way.

Books

UNREAL GROWTH (Volumes I & II). Edited by Ngo Manh-Lan. Delhi, Hindustan Publishing Corporation, 1984.

THE international economic crisis which started slightly more than a decade back has produced a large number of publications by numerous social scientists. Very few of them have specifically attempted to look at the problems of the Asian countries from a non-western perspective. At last we have a major work, designed and coordinated by a Vietnamese scholar, not very well-known in these parts, who seeks to redress the balance. This book, in two volumes, has an international sweep but is firmly rooted in the Asian context and provides a welcome palliative to the strong doses of Anglo-Saxon theorising.

The design of the work is logical. Manh-Lan would initially like the reader to grasp the international ramifications of the crisis. This is done in Section I of Part A where the contradictions in the western

economies and the ineffectual attempts to resolve them are spelt out. Alexandre Faure details the increasing competition among the industrialised countries in limited markets, their failure in redeployment and their stake in an 'extroverted' pattern of growth in the South countries which would sustain the operations of the western economies.

In this exercise, only those developing countries with the requisite population, industrial experience and raw materials will be chosen, thereby aggravating the differences among the developing countries. Christian Palloix demolishes the thesis of semi-industrialisation assiduously put forward by many economists who consider it a symptom of the establishment of a new international order. In the process, he shows up interesting data on the increasing indebtedness of the Third World, and arrives at the core of his analysis, namely, the new domination of the Third World. This is done by exporting capital goods and technology which result in ineffective production systems, and also by excluding the developing countries from the international production system. Other

contributors like Andre Gunder Frank, Herbert Schiller and Sukhamoy Chakravarty also question the internal logic and underlying assumptions of the New International Economic Order movement.

Section II on the Politics of Transnational Corporations (TNCs), although informative and stimulating, does not really get to grips with the subject. Despite the enormous attention focussed on the working of entities like IBM, ITT, United Fruit, et al, the contributors in this section are content with theoretical expositions on the subject. The emphasis is on the economic aspects; Widyono deals with the negotiating frameworks between host governments and TNCs while Mahadevan has a rather cursory analysis of 'appropriate' technology. Only Magallona comes near the central theme. Admittedly, it is difficult to find watertight evidence on the working of TNCs but one would have liked a more detailed expose of, say, ITT's role in toppling the Allende government. May be, Gunder Frank could have been asked to contribute to this section too.

Sectors II & IV of Part A conclude the analysis and description of the international setting. Kinley, Collins and Lappe have a thought-provoking piece on U.S. aid to Asia in which they systematically demolish the fallacious assumptions on U.S. aid made by most liberal scholars. Numerous studies and publications are cited to show that U.S. aid has been deliberately channelled in a manner clearly calculated to serve U.S. interests and the interests of those elite groups which are the natural allies of the U.S. The authors rightly conclude that the underlying issue is the power structure in the recipient countries.

Section I of Part B begins the specific study of the Asian scenario. Dealing with India, it tries to understand the role of monopoly capitalism in the development process of Asia's second largest country. The basic contradictions between the self-professed path of socialist development and the retention of economic power in private hands, between the goal of economic independence and the reliance on international aid, are highlighted. Ajit Roy's is a more schematic approach while S.C. Sharma uses existing data to underline the growth of monopoly groups. Jairus Banaji comes up with a very innovative piece on the collective bargaining process in the Bombay-Thana region, though the exact linkage of this piece with the main theme of this section is not clear.

The discussion in Sections II and III moves over to South East Asia where the role of foreign capital was (and is) much more important than in India. Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia are case-book examples of post-colonial countries where foreign capital, at times, has been the dominant force. Lim Mah Hui and Sundaram and Woon analyse the Malaysian example where foreign capital may even have been used as a counterweight to the economic influence of the Chinese community. For example, the Bumiputra policy made it obligatory for foreign companies to seek Malay partners. Lim Mah Hui

stresses the point that formal foreign ownership of assets has been reduced but without any corresponding decline in foreign control.

So far as Singapore is concerned, the regime equated the interests of the State with those of foreign investors. Noeleen Heyzer, in a very perceptive piece, spells out the surgical precision of the Singaporean experiment carried out by former socialists now imbued with the conviction that TNCs provided the only solution to the island's problems of unemployment and poverty. The resultant costs in terms of repression, tension, inequalities and lack of creativity are clearly highlighted by Heyzer. The Indonesian and South Korean experiences are also neatly dissected in companion pieces, showing the comprador nature of the Indonesian State and revealing the unacceptable face of the South Korean experiment, warts and all. In fact, Sunoo's study on South Korea should be made compulsory reading for that country's apologists in India.

In Part C, the coverage is of the Asian agricultural sector. Pradhan Prasad, Arun Bose, S.N. Mishra and P.C. Joshi deal with India while the experiences of our sub-continental neighbours are also covered. The importance of residual semi-feudal relations and caste-class factors is stressed. In some ways, the heart of the subject is dealt with here — how basically feudal agrarian systems, left threadbare in the post-colonial era, are sought to be transformed in the context of famine and land hunger.

Arun Bose, in an elegant and realistic piece using the Sraffa approach, clearly demonstrates the economic consequences of different land-reform regimes. In the case of State-landlordism, as opposed to peasant proprietorship, workers' wages remain stagnant while capitalist consumption increases. Shari and Sundaram, in their study on rice-farming in Malaysia clearly show the growing inequalities brought about by adoption of HYV techniques and other practices associated with the Green Revolution.

Finally, Part D, which seeks to raise basic issues pertaining to the alternative developmental paths that are open to the Asian countries. This, frankly, is disappointing, probably because of the expectations aroused by the material in the earlier sections. It is possible that summarising the core areas is an herculean task but the editor's arrangement does not help matters. Pajestka's treatise on the Eastern European experience is not really relevant because of the substantial differences between the two areas. Tom Weisskopf makes a determined effort to spell out concrete alternate programmes, related to self-reliance, and delinking. He lists specific steps which are required for this purpose and then goes on to discuss the political economy of self-reliance. Finally, there is a perceptive analysis of dependence and development by a Brazilian social scientist, T. Dos Santos, who seeks to inter-relate dependency, capitalism, socialism and anti-imperialism. He may not present a total schema but throws up enough pointers for further thinking.

In general, these two volumes provide sufficient food for thought. What we get is a different framework which cannot be neatly categorised under a single heading. It is a radical socialist approach but without the usual rhetoric. A lot of the literature referred to is from continental European and Latin American sources, not generally catalogued in Anglo-Saxon publications. Thus, for the average Indian reader, it opens up new vistas. The Indian publishers deserve to be patted for bringing out this work and one hopes for a follow-up in the near future.

Jay Bhattacharjee

SELF AND SOCIETY: A Study in Gandhian Thought by Ramashray Roy. Delhi, Sage Publications in collaboration with the United Nations University, Tokyo, 1985.

AN important clue to Ramashray Roy's study of Gandhian thought is contained in the bibliography of his book — where, apart from references to Gandhi's own writings, we find only six titles on Gandhi. The remainder of the references range from Jacques Maritain and Martin Buber to J.J. Rousseau and William Blake. A more explicit pointer to the central problem of this book is to be found in its first chapter, where Dr. Roy poses the question to which he addresses himself throughout: viz., Gandhi's vision of an 'other and better' world. He demonstrates the poverty of the western intellectual tradition in resolving the problem of the relationship between the individual and society in a way that would fulfil the ideals of 'freedom, meaning and community'.

His contention is that all western thought has failed to meet this theoretical challenge, chiefly because it proceeds from the assumption of progress as a desideratum. Gandhi, on the other hand, questions the very idea of progress as embodied in 'modern civilization', rejects it in its entirety, and proposes an altogether different view of the 'self', which informs his perspectives on society, economics and politics.

For Ramashray Roy, the crisis of modern civilization and, therefore, the crisis of the social philosophy which supports it, is ultimately rooted in the Enlightenment view of man and society. This view, which implicitly and commonly forms the underpinning of the classical liberal creed, assumes a mechanistic view of the world which must be continually transformed, through the exercise of reason, to serve man's purposes, which have their origin in desire. The goal is progress, defined in terms of material well-being. This is, therefore, a view which completely ignores the inner reality of man, seen here as an egotistical, acquisitive being, relentlessly engaged in the pursuit of happiness, regardless of whether or not this happiness is compatible with that of others.

In other words, there is as little harmony between man and society as there is within man himself. Further, in Dr. Roy's view, the philosophical alternatives offered by Rousseau, Herder, Kant, Hegel and even Marx, cannot resolve this crisis of the 'broken totality' (Iris Murdoch), for they invariably open the door to totalitarianism, to the submergence of the individual in society, of the part in the whole.

It is Dr. Roy's claim that the Gandhian solution to this dilemma, rooted as it is in a very different conception of the 'self' offers a complete — social, economic and political — alternative to these manifestly unsatisfactory western answers. While recognizing the distinction between the phenomenal world and one's real self, the Gandhian view seeks a solution not outside the phenomenal world, but in and through it. This must take the form of self-development and self-realization through action, oriented not to self-interest, but to *lokasamgraha*, through the amelioration of the sufferings of one's fellow men. Through such action, moreover, the 'journeying self' continues its quest for God and truth. Thus, while true individuality consists in reducing oneself to nought, the other face of self-development is the idea of the extended self.

Earlier (western) attempts to resolve this dilemma had, according to Roy, culminated in either the individualistic model (in which society is seen as an aggregate of autonomous, self-sufficient and self-defining subjects) or in its exact opposite, the communitarian model (where the collectivity takes primacy, and the individual is devoured). Gandhi's position, the author claims, enables him to transcend this quality — of man and society — altogether, to assert sociality as an integral part of one's self and to create harmony where three centuries of western thought have succeeded only in creating discord through the sacrifice of one or the other — the individual or society.

However, Dr. Roy himself relates this Gandhian view of the self to Jacques Maritain's distinction between individuality and personality, where individuality is material, egotistical and naturally unsocial, while personality, assuming the primacy of 'the life of spirit and of freedom' over that of passion and the senses, inclines man towards freedom and goodness, and thereby provides a basis for natural sociality. In this sense, then, Gandhian politics involve village republics where there is a democracy of persons and not of individuals.

In the sphere of the economy, too, this conception of the self has important consequences. Modern civilization, based on industrialism and sophisticated technology, to satisfy man's ever-increasing wants, is a civilization based on greed and immorality. It cannot but lead to violence, inequality and domination. For Gandhi, the choice must be between economic progress and moral progress, for one excludes the other. Hence his utopia of decentralized, self-sufficient and yet interdependent village.

communities where equality (*samyavad*) will be tempered by benignity (*saumya*).

Finally, there is the question of politics and freedom. Having rejected the Enlightenment view of man, Gandhi naturally and logically rejects the liberal politics of self-interest. The dilemma of community/fraternity/freedom versus organization/power/order implies significant and interesting questions. But the Gandhian answer, as presented by Dr. Roy, is less than convincing: a *Ramarajya*, where politics is inseparable from, and subordinated to, religion. It has all the familiar ingredients — non-violence, *satyagraha* and *swaraj* — but they fail to convey a meaningful resolution of the questions raised.

The chapter on freedom is perhaps the weakest section of the book. Here, Dr. Roy dwells at length on the familiar problem of negative and positive liberty, in its classic articulation by Sir Isaiah Berlin, and give us, very briefly, the Gandhian solution: freedom through self-realization. He does not, however, take stock of the actual theoretical distance between the Gandhian position and Sir Isaiah's bugbear of positive liberty, the Temple of Sarastro. We are left feeling unsure that there is a difference of kind, rather than of degree.

As interpreted by Ramashray Roy, Gandhi's intervention in this seemingly eternal philosophical debate about man, society and freedom, occupies tenuous ground. It would perhaps have been more fruitful completely to shift the terrain of the debate about freedom, as Denis Dalton has done, from negative vs. positive freedom to internal vs. external freedom, and to judge Gandhi solely in terms of the latter frame of reference, rather than in terms of both.

Further, since it is manifestly clear that the Gandhian perception of man and society is quite distinct from the Enlightenment view, one wishes that Dr. Roy had demonstrated this once and very briefly (rather than repeatedly and at length) and concentrated, instead, on showing us the finer points of the distinction between the consequences of the alternative western view and the Gandhian. As it stands, one is left with the uncomfortable suspicion that the Gandhian vision veers strongly towards precisely that organic view from which Dr. Roy is at pains to distinguish it.

There is something disturbing, also, about Dr. Roy's repeated use of polar opposites, and the continuity between them. Essentially, he gives us two models throughout the book, using different attributes of each on different occasions. Thus, we have atomistic vs. organic societies, individualistic vs. communitarian models, the primacy of reason vs. that of emotion, perception vs. consciousness, liberalism vs. totalitarianism, chaos vs. nothingness, negative liberty vs. positive liberty. Is it legitimate and valid, one wonders, to divide western philosophy, and social and political theory, from the 17th to the 19th. centuries, in this black-and-white manner,

where every significant philosophical statement must be ranged on one side or the other? There is something faintly reductionist about such an exercise.

Nevertheless, this is an adventurous study, the richest contribution of which lies in the questions raised, rather than in the answers offered. It is relatively unusual to find works on Gandhi attempting to judge his system of ideas from an external reference point; and while there may be two views or more about the academic legitimacy of such an exercise, Ramashray Roy's attempt, backed by his wide-ranging scholarship, is philosophically absorbing.

Niraja Gopal

NORTH EAST REGION — Problems and Prospects of Development. Edited by B.L. Abbi. Carrid Publications, 1984.

THE North East has continued to remain elusive; it is one of the lesser known and least understood regions of India. Insurgency, agitations and developments of like nature have resulted in its gaining national lime light, albeit temporarily.

This book, the result of a 4 day seminar held in Chandigarh, in April, 1984, is to be welcomed in that it is an attempt to document available information and prevailing thought on the North East. Opinions expressed naturally appear to be constrained by the very choice of participants at the seminar. As the editor himself admits, it does not purport to give a uniform coverage of the area, and there is greater emphasis on Assam and its recent problems. In fact, a major section of the book projects the foreign nationals issue as the prime deterrent to development and it is the immigration problem which is of overwhelming concern.

The book is divided into four parts. The first consists of a useful introduction, addresses, etc. The second part deals with demographic transformation in the context of foreign nationals migration, unbalanced economic development and social tensions. Consensus seems to emerge that the lack of development is due to high population growth rates, low agricultural productivity, lack of communications, lack of entrepreneurship, poor infrastructure, etc. As J.B. Ganguly rightly points out, the development process itself has led to the emergence of new social and political tension.

The third section relates to issues of social and cultural diversity amidst the objective of national integration. The traditional unity in diversity theme is explored theoretically by Misi and Misi and S.M. Dubey. More empirical approaches have been adopted by others. Omen Deori's 'North a Perspective' does not attempt any more than a simplistic expression of the aspirations of the people and their feeling of neglect. D. Khathing's 'Science Education in the North East', seems incongruous in the section.

C. Narayan Rao's 'Crisis in Mizoram' is no better than a schoolboy's essay. Much of it is devoted to his impressions of distant Aizwal. His descriptive skill is doubtful and analytical ability totally absent, and what exactly he is trying to say is hard to fathom. 'The Mizos consider themselves superior human beings and look down upon others as second class citizens (pg. 241). How he has arrived at this startling conclusion is anybody's guess. Irrelevant statements abound. His prescription for bringing Mizoram closer to India is the opening up of TV centres — screening of films on Indian culture and the development of communications.

The last part of the book is entitled 'Assam Movement — Identities and Influx of Foreigners'. This section reads like a propaganda piece for AASU and contains innumerable loaded value judgements. Undeniably, the movement has been the most mass-based agitation in recent years, but its degeneration into a partly fascist movement cannot be ignored. D.P. Baruah's 'Silent Civilian Invasion, India's Danger in the North East' contains statistics regarding the number of foreign nationals which are ascribed to NERSU estimates — but how these estimates have been arrived at is not mentioned.

Thus while each article is not being discussed here, it must be mentioned that the quality is highly erratic. The book is at best a motley collection with little editing. Accelerated economic development appears to be the remedy but how exactly this will come about is not discussed in any detail.

The contributors have not been able to be objective; they are constrained by their very selves. Outsiders are unable to comprehend clearly the intricate, interwoven complexities of the exotic North East, and those who belong are so charged with passion that they can only project the sense of neglect and fear that they seem to harbour. Nonetheless, the fact that the North East merited a seminar at Chandigarh is commendable and the book has a certain limited value as it presents the perception of the people of their own very real problems.

Nandini Mongia

EMERGING FROM PROPERTY: The Economics that Really Matters by Gerald M. Meier. New York, Oxford University Press.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES: A Sociological Perspective by Shiv R. Mehta. New Delhi, Sage Publications.

THE ruling paradigm of the process of economic development rests on the classical-neoclassical view of a world with gradual, nondisruptive, and largely painless change. Output is conceived of as the jugular of development and growth its manifestation. And the emphasis is on the spread and trickling-

down effects of growth. However, after more than three decades of the development effort, two billion people in the world continue to live in abject poverty. And, as Myrdal expresses it, facts kick.

The coexistence of poverty and stagnation in some areas, with abundance and rapid progress in others, has precipitated a crisis of confidence among all those who are concerned with development, forcing a reappraisal of what has happened in developing countries. Such a reappraisal has been attempted from two different standpoints: by Gerald M. Meier, on the one hand, an economist trying to understand the failure of economics; and by Shiv R. Mehta, on the other, placing the issue in a sociological perspective.

Meier's effort is to give an account of the development process and theory in language that is accessible to the non-specialist. At the very outset he identifies the economic, of being poor with the economics that really matters. His purpose is to discover 'what can realistically be done to lessen the pain of poverty still suffered daily by two thirds of humanity.' But with this he comes to the dual and conflicting character of the economist's enterprise: the clash of the head and the heart. For, the economist, as social scientist, is required to act as the 'guardian of rationality'. On the other hand, the voluminous 'statistics of misery' force him simultaneously to see himself as a 'trustee for the poor'.

The persistence of unemployment and underemployment, the increasing number in absolute poverty, and the growing inequality in the distribution of income and assets have all come about despite increasing proportions of national income being invested and quite respectable rates of growth of GNP. A critical assessment of the achievements and disappointments in the development record lead Meier to the conclusion that it is no longer sufficient to leave development to the forces of the market, and, instead of focusing on any aggregate indices of development, it is imperative to formulate policy towards the direct achievement of better nourishment, health, education, living conditions, and conditions of employment for the low end poverty groups.

But at this juncture the tension created by the conflicting dictates of the head and the heart force Meier into a schizoid perception of economic reality. For, despite the best of intentions, he cannot free himself of the neoclassical paradigm and what Myrdal has described as the biases of the 'post-war approach'. 'As guardians of rationality', he writes, 'economists, are concerned with instrumental rationality — that is, how to achieve most economically a given objective. On the given objective, however, they pass no judgement — only the means of achieving the objective are scrutinized in economic terms.'

The key to Meier's failure is in the expression 'in economic terms'. With this he lapses into a fundamentally deficient approach that abstracts from

attitudes and institutions. Meier's insistence on 'economic' explanation blinds him to the play of vested interests, to corruption, bigotry, the irrational influences of religion, region, caste, and kinship that are prime movers in an underdeveloped economy. Thus, despite seminal insights into the actual function of the less developed economies he returns again, and again to analysis in terms of GNP, savings, employment and output within the setting of markets, prices and technical coefficients.

Meier rejects the radical critique of orthodox liberal ideology and recommends liberalization of foreign trade régimes, a system of incentives and disincentives to operate on industry and agriculture, and minimal arbitrary constraints. The broad pattern of development falls within the larger framework of neoclassical economics and an emphasis on the market price system, though marginal changes are certainly required to explain away the 'most troubling problems of development'. In the final analysis, he betrays both his head and his heart.

With four fifths of the population in less developed countries concentrated in rural areas, the development of these areas becomes a precondition for the alleviation of poverty. With this fundamental insight, Mehta sets out to provide a 'new paradigm' for rural development based on a 'sociological perspective'. Interestingly enough; there are more tables and economic statistics in his book than can be found in Meier's. His first chapters are evidently intended to provide the 'sociological perspective' and there are references to the 'sociology of knowledge', to 'the inner consistency of certain core values of the Hindu religion' which are seen as the cause of poverty and backwardness, to 'the caste system and to stratification in rural society.

Having done his duty by way of sociological analysis, Mehta proceeds to evaluating, in purely economic terms, the various programmes for rural development undertaken by the government; and backed by statistics on unemployment, inequality in distribution of income and assets, illiteracy, health, malnutrition and population growth, brings us to the unexciting conclusion that the programmes have, by and large, failed. The failure is traced to the 'continued emphasis by the government on developmental inputs on urban areas; the higher growth of population in rural areas; recurring input/output costs in urban areas on the assets created; the transfer of rural money to urban areas; and persisting inflation.' A list strangely devoid of any reference to factors other than economic.

There are, of course, repeated exhortations to take non-economic factors into consideration, but they are not integral to the analysis, nor to the not-so-new 'alternative approach' to rural development that Mehta suggests. He has, rather erratically, raised a large number of issues, but he fails to carry his analysis to its logical limits.

Ajai Sahni

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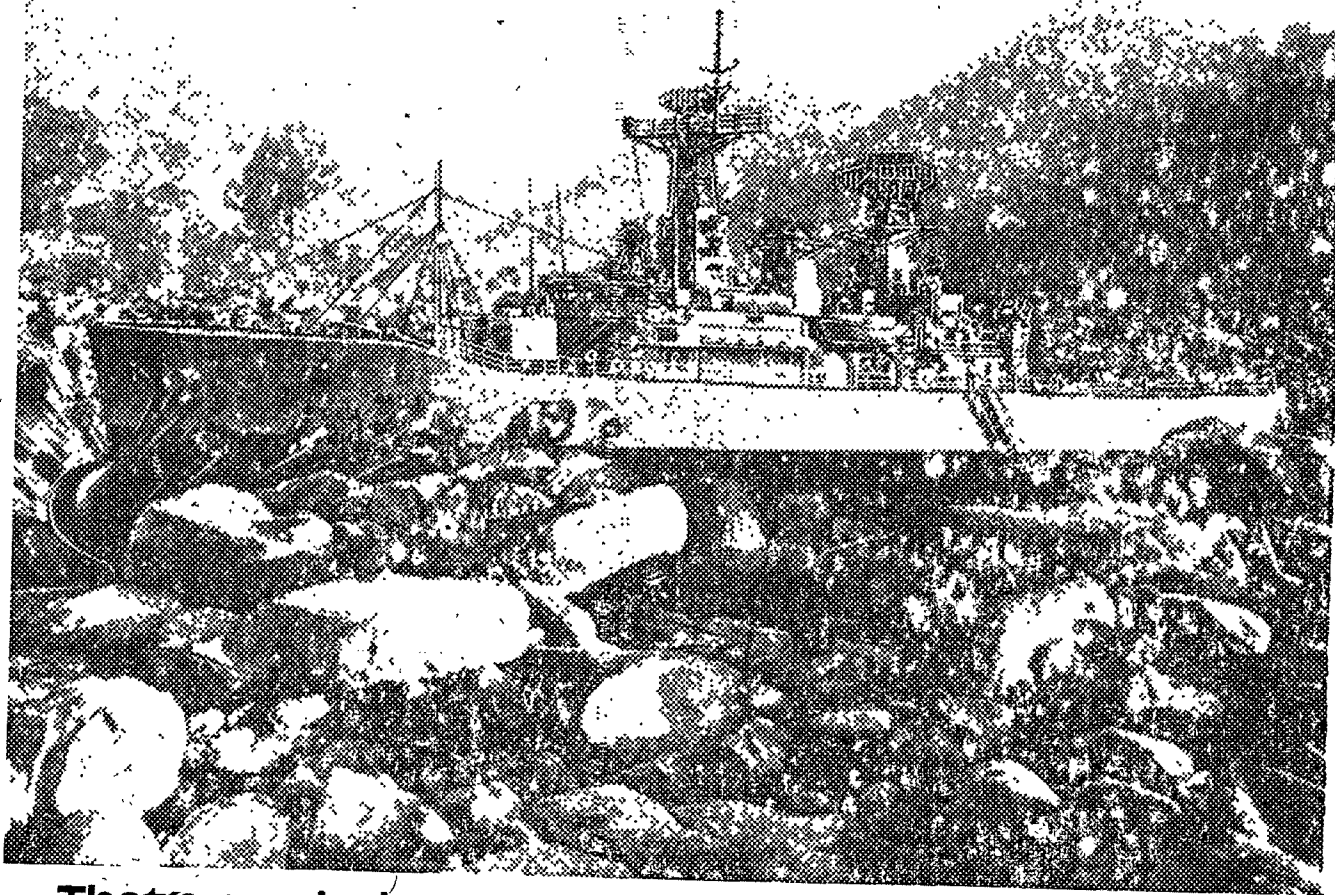
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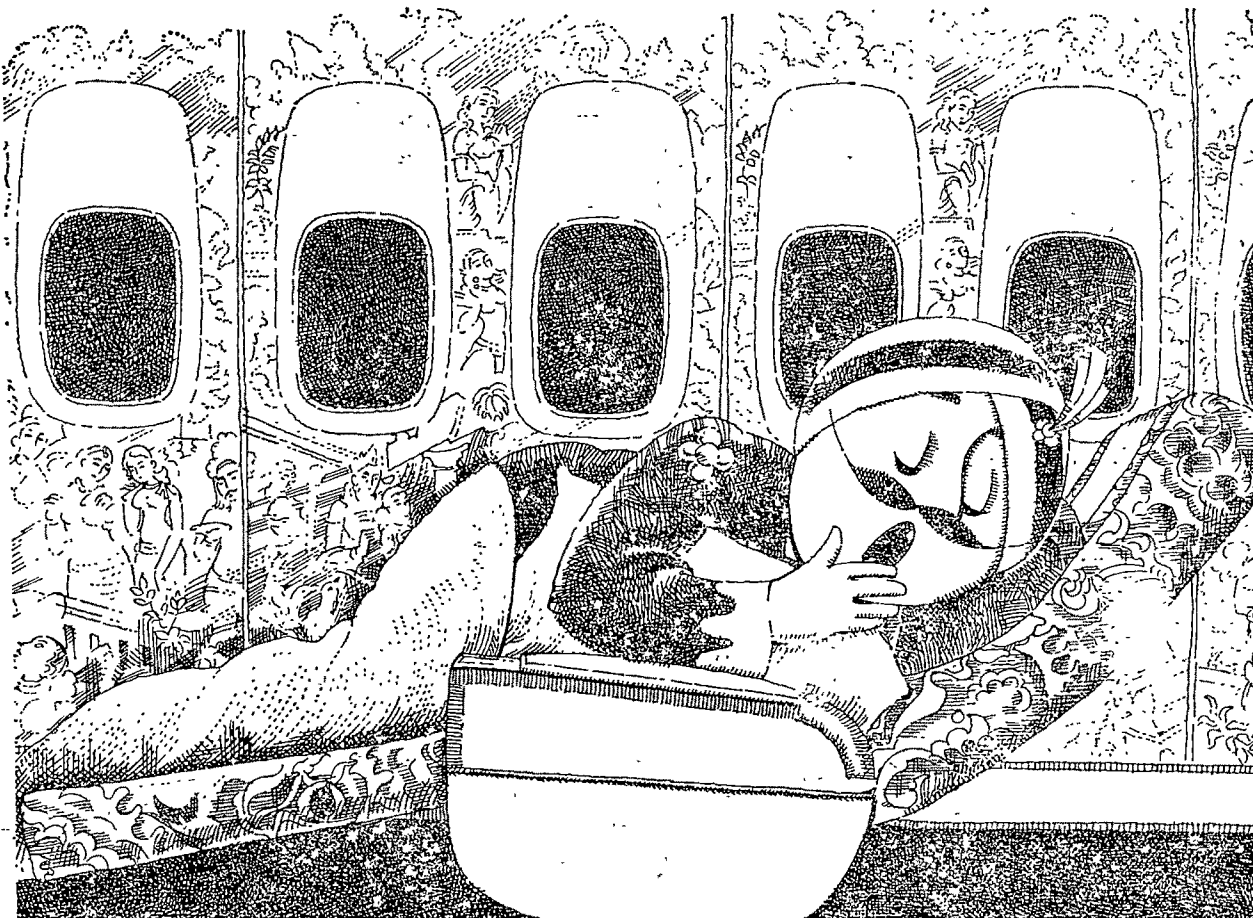
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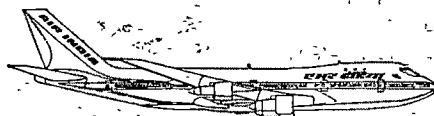
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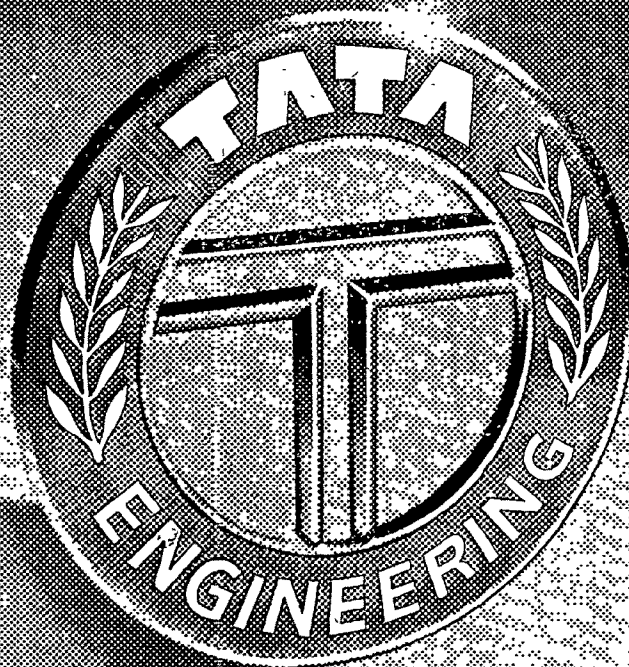


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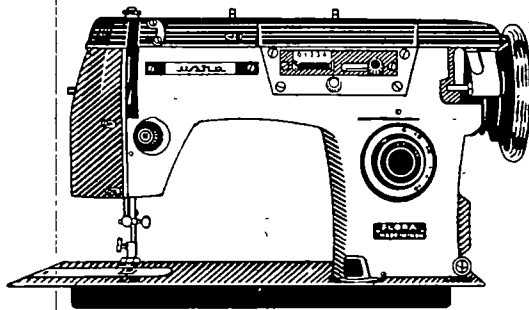
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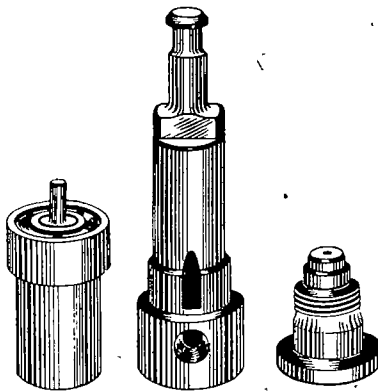
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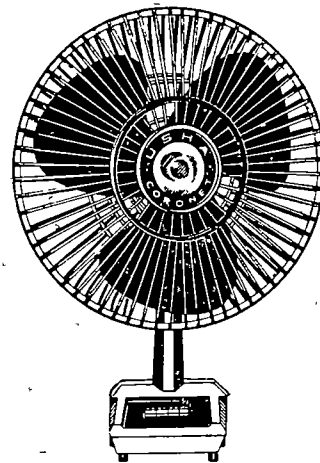
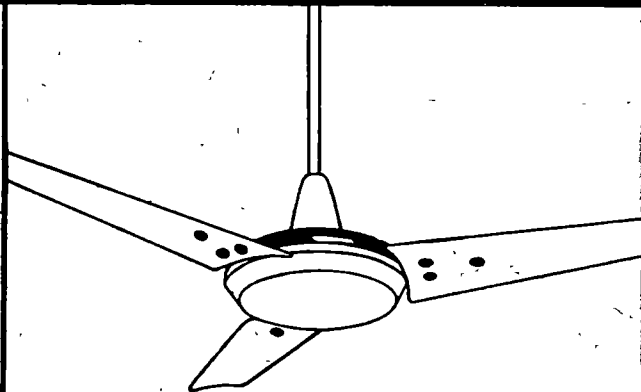
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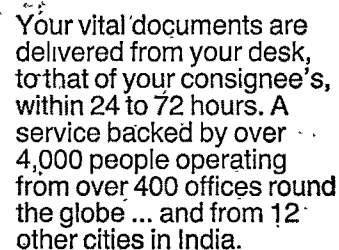
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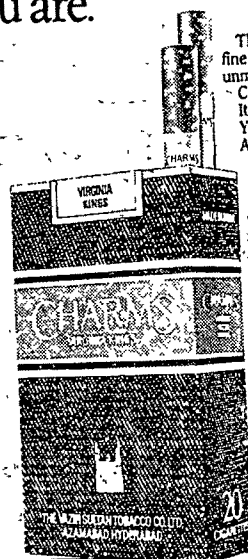
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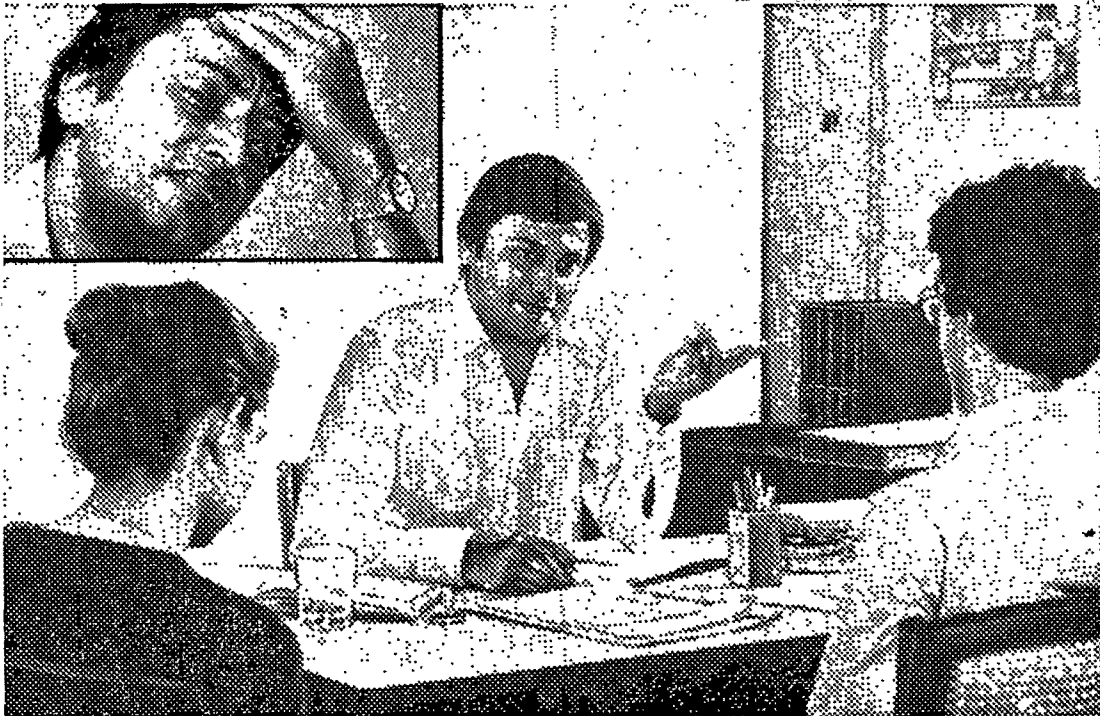
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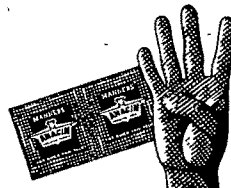
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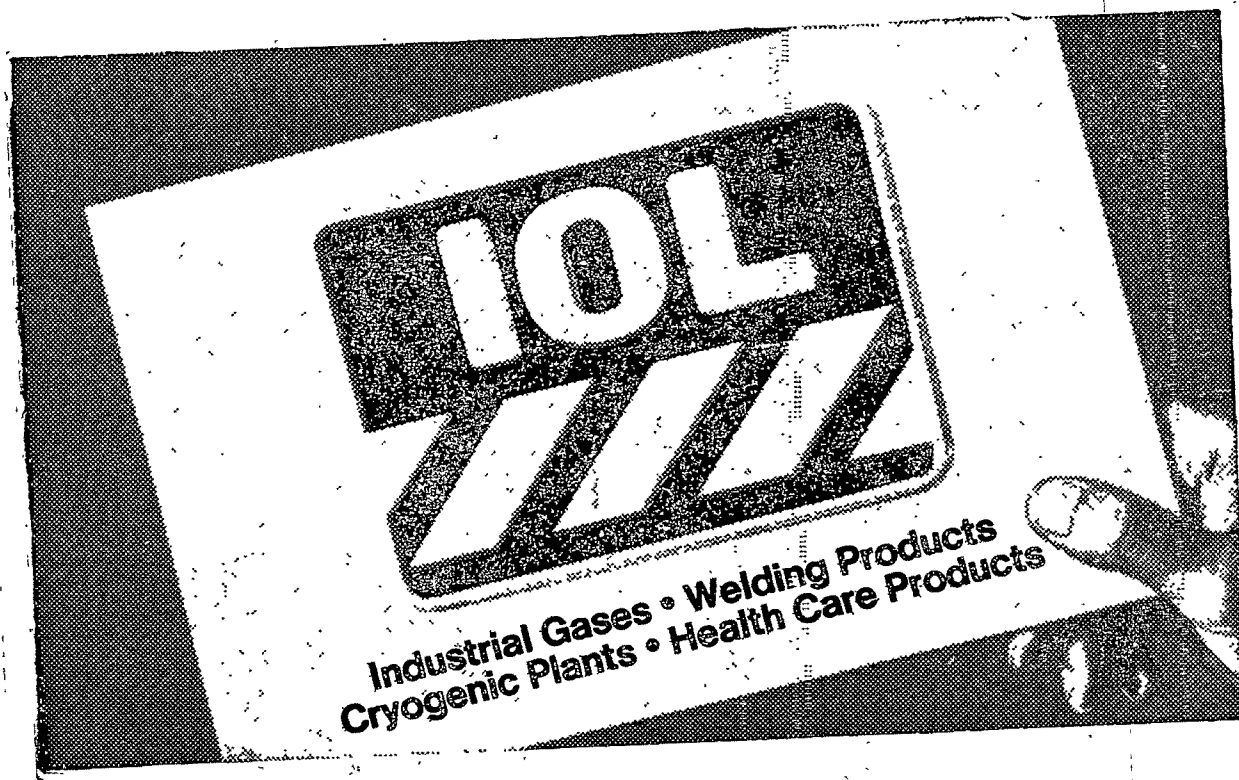
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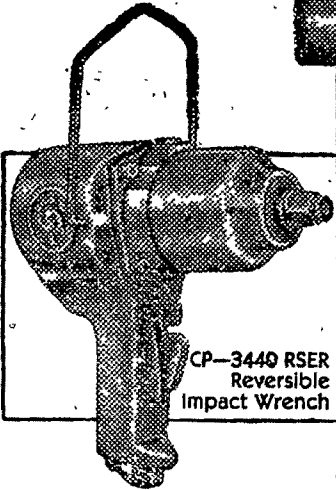
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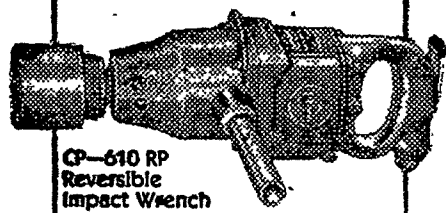
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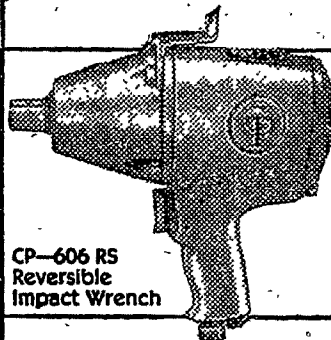
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NEXT MONTH: MEDITATION

310

A WARLESS WORLD

a symposium

on the

potentials of peace

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

Posed by Aurelio Peccei, Founder President of the Club of Rome until his death in 1984

THE ARMS RACE

Alexander King, Chairman, International Federation of Institutes of Advanced Study, France, now President of the Club of Rome

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY STRUCTURE

Helio Jaguaribe, Professor, Institute of Political and Social Studies, Brazil

NOW IS THE TIME

John Platt, Professor, University of Michigan, USA

CONQUERING SPACE

Mahdi Elmandjra, former Assistant Director General, Unesco, now Professor, University of Mohamed V, Morocco

A GLOBAL SALVAGE OPERATION

Romesh Thapar, Editor, 'Seminar'

BOOKS

Reviewed by Tejbir Singh, P. Chatterjee, Dinesh Mohan, Rita Manchanda and Harsh Sethi

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury of Dilip Chowdhury Associates

This issue consists of a number of interventions made by members of the Club of Rome at various meetings on matters of concern to the future.

The problem

It is the worst of times, it is the best of times,
it is the age of foolishness, it is the age of wisdom,
it is the winter of despair, it is the spring of hope,
we have nothing before us, we have everything before us.
—Charles Dickens

THE history of man is the history of his inquisitive mind and dexterous hands, and hence of his ideas, discoveries, inventions and industry; of his love for life, and therefore of his arts, songs and poetry; of his wonder about what may lie beyond, and thus of his faiths and myths; of his gregariousness, and then of his cities and empires, and also of his institutions and laws; as well as the history of his fears and ambitions and, consequently, of his conquests and his teeter-tottering between peace and war. All these characters and manifestations of man are likely to continue and flourish—except one, which is no longer tolerable: war, and its quintessential element, violence.

Never before were the alternatives of man so global as they are now, and never before were they so extreme, because never before was his capacity for building and creation so limitless and his power of destruction so absolute, as they are now. Henceforth, all will essentially depend on whether he is at peace or at war with himself and his world. We must therefore take to heart a few new basic exigencies.

Each one of us and all peoples and nations must realize that the banishment of war and of military and nonmilitary violence from the parameters of human evolution has now become imperative if this very evolution is not to end in disaster.

At the same time, as 'development' seems to have

become humankind's paramount goal, we must also convince ourselves that no really worthwhile development can possibly be attained unless peace prevails on earth.

We must therefore see peace as the primary factor in this crucial equation, and understand it in its universal depth and breadth of non-violence not only at all levels and sectors of human society but also in the relationships between human society and nature.

We must clarify the concept of development any way, in order to reconcile in our single world the aspirations of those who have plenty and claim still more with the needs of those who desperately want just to stay alive and not to fall into even more abject poverty.

To recognise these premises, a profound mutation is needed in our traditional outlook and values; and we must first of all free ourselves from the 'complex of violence' we inherited from our ancestors. This complex is still usually considered part of the human nature because it served our forefathers well during the long centuries of their ascent; but they were weak and on the defensive, and it was thus expedient for them to resort to violence to assert themselves, while now we have much more power than we are able to control or need to rule the entire planet. It is time then to recognise that violence, an erstwhile means of survival, can now become the cause of our doom.

This cultural evolution, however, is made more difficult by the emergence in this period of great transitions of several huge new problems which intertwine with the many old ones that are still unresolved. In fact, the age-old problems of population, hunger, poverty, ignorance, injustice and intolerance combine with new ones generated by the current international financial and monetary chaos, the unprecedented size and complexity of human systems, the gross abuse

*Aurelio Peccei was the founder President of the Club of Rome. This was one of his last interventions at a conference in December, 1983.

and misuse we make of technology, and the devastation we are causing to our natural environment. Our difficulties are further aggravated by the ossification and bureaucratisation of our institutions, as well as by the decay of our moral values and civic virtues, and our loss of faith in ourselves or a superior power.

We may call it the predicament of modern man. The cold war and armaments frenzy, local conflicts, civil violence, and the fatal temptation to resort to force in order to resolve situations which seem otherwise insuperable, are all results of it; and so is the stalemate which blocks all efforts to promote a more equitable order and development in the world community and threatens to condemn irremediably a majority of the humans to want and deprivation.

Our major flaw in approaching this entangled situation is that we invariably try to deal with all the problems individually, as if each one of them could be isolated from the rest; and then we focus on symptoms of this problematique rather than going deeper to attack the ills and dysfunctions which lie at its origin.

The most blatant and tragic example of our mistaken attitudes is that we consider the life-and-death question of war or peace independently from its root causes. We approach it as if we had to deal with the more or less self-contained technical problem of the arms race vs. disarmament, and as if this problem could be separated from all the others and treated in essentially military-diplomatic terms. In following this path so outside the reality of the world, the experts have had to bring into the picture so many intricate technicalities that not even they seem to understand any more where they stand, while what they say is totally incomprehensible to people in general.

No wonder then that the disarmament talks have so far led nowhere and that, despite all the hopes it originally raised, even the UN General Assembly convened expressly in June 1982 for a second-time in a special session to promote disarmament ended in utter failure and frustration. No wonder, too, that during the more than thirty years of these negotiations the thermonuclear arsenals have not ceased to grow, so much so that now they are a million and half times more powerful than before.

It goes without saying that there should certainly be no slackening in efforts to try to reach some agreements on prevention of wars, solution of conflicts, arms control, establishment of nuclear-and chemical-weapon free zones, demilitarisations and disarmament generally by following this path. It would be foolish however to expect that such agreements would in any way be equivalent to peace.

No measure of military disarmament alone can bring about a warless world or stop overt or covert military research and development of new infernal weaponry that can boost our overkill potential; nor can it avoid balance-of-power agreements being much more than writing in the sand; nor yet can it put an end to the creeping proliferation of the means of mini-violence which in many countries are already transforming the rule of law and legitimate political or social protest into brutal government repression and torture on the one hand, and bloody subversion and terrorism on the other.

More reliable ways to establish the conditions of peace on earth must be found. The Club of Rome is committed to contribute to the search for them, and this paper has been prepared with this purpose.

To reiterate, violence and its ideology of whatever sort must be viewed as remnants of a past which is

no more. Indeed they are cultural derangements and social pathologies as incompatible with the present-day world community as would be slavery or human sacrifice.

Quite evidently, then, we need a new philosophy of life to rid ourselves of our propensity for violence and replace it by serene, responsible recognition of the fact that our situation has changed and that we must restore balance and harmony in ourselves and our world. This philosophy of life will necessarily be different from that which guided our forebears in simpler times, when their problems were much smaller and their knowledge and means much more rudimentary.

We must realize that our new philosophy of life must be fully consistent with the singularities and exigencies of this new age, and that the imperative of peace and non-violence is the principle of the 'pillars of wisdom' on which it has to be established.

It no doubt behoves our generations, who have the good or bad fortune to live at these hinges of history, to bring humankind across this new threshold of vision and wisdom. But we cannot rely much for this on the world's politico-economic establishment which almost everywhere is largely un-receptive to any such reasoning, while the two super-powers are so absorbed in their power games and each is so obsessed by the other's nuclear potential that for the moment they are basically opposed to any innovation which may even remotely challenge their self-concerned, self-righteous postures and schemes.

Public opinion, on the contrary, can by and large be a positive factor in many countries. It is so shaken by what it sees happening in the world, and so afraid of what may come next, that it would welcome a turn for the better even at the cost of some, by no means few, sacrifices. Popular awareness of the paramountcy of these issues is anyway capital because great societal changes cannot last if they do not win the hearts and minds of citizens.

What is particularly encouraging is the vast involvement of the young who, having always been taught the martial arts by their elders, are now teaching their elders the arts of peace. The young are in fact the principal animators of the peace movements and the 'green' movements which, although having just surfaced here, while still simmering there, tend to converge into a popular groundswell grass-roots force that demands a more humane and responsible society right cross the board.

To support these aspirations, The Club of Rome has promoted the *Forum Humanum* project. Based on an international network of young men and women, it calls them to explore what positive futures would be open to the human community if it becomes inherently peace-loving and peaceful. The prospects are most heartening and therefore some

preliminary indications will be presented in 1985, on the occasion of the International Youth Year of the United Nations.

The idea is thus taking shape that, in the same way that violence in relations among men must be repelled, so, too, a stop must be put to the senseless use of violence against the natural environments on which our life itself ultimately depends.

The recognition that worldwide peace with nature is as primary as peace among humans will be a decisive turning point, the more so if coupled with the recognition that peace with nature would remain indispensable even if the danger of war and all other threats and problems were miraculously to vanish.

We should in this regard know that the state of our planet is none too good. It offers a dismaying picture of depletion and degradation: wilderness, the treasure chest of nature, disappearing; deserts advancing; tropical forests rapidly destroyed; coastal zones and estuaries ruined; large numbers of animal and plant species condemned to extinction; waters, soils and the very air we breathe contaminated; natural cycles, climate and the ozone layer tampered with, often irreversibly; human ecology directly affected by over-harvesting, overgrazing and overfishing, which submits the strategic biological systems of croplands, pasturelands and fisheries to stress precisely when they are called upon to satisfy exponentially growing human demands. And so on and so forth.

These unwholesome conditions have been caused because we have violated the unwritten law of nature that species are made to live together complementing one another, and resorting to violence only when this is needed to feed themselves or to protect their life. We thought ourselves to be an exception and virtually free to use our arms and tools for any purpose we had in mind, even for such questionable objectives as just acquiring prestige or satisfying greed and caprice. Thus, confusing might with right, we subjugated or eliminated all creatures we could lay our sights on — including our weaker fellow humans — and exploited the earth's resources beyond all reasonable limits. We are now paying the price for this cavalier attitude.

But the harm we have done so far to our world habitat is probably very slight compared with what we are likely to do in the future, turning the already critical situation in many regions into one that will be well-nigh dramatic.

The world population, which is now at a record high of 4.7 billion, will probably exceed six billion in the year 2000, thus adding more people in barely 17 years than those who lived on earth one century ago.

The present generations are expected to consume more natural resources during their life-time than all past generations put together.

Individual demands are continually soaring, so that total demand will increase more rapidly than population, probably doubling in the next two decades.

Successively, both population and demand will go on growing still more, probably for most of the next century.

Thus, if decisive steps are not taken while there is still time to protect and conserve the global environment, the danger that humankind will be 'choked' slowly but surely because its own weight steadily decreases the planet's 'carrying capacity' is no less real than the danger that it will be destroyed as a consequence of a nuclear clash.

Fortunately, thanks to their basic commonsense, people are beginning to be worried as to how the earth can manage, in its present conditions, to accommodate all the newly expected waves of population without being literally trampled underfoot; and they are equally concerned about what, even worse, might happen if it cannot.

They also know that nowadays major events occurring in one part of the planet are apt to have repercussions everywhere; and therefore they fear that one day or another some unexpected ecological crisis takes place somewhere in the globe, seriously affecting the entire system. As a consequence, they feel that it is high time that, in everybody's interest, the nations of the world should evolve adequate common action to safeguard the natural ecosystems while the worst can yet be prevented from happening.

Psychologically, then, the circumstances are relatively favourable to involve public opinion in a movement to search for ways leading to a safer future by focussing initially on our relations with nature. This is an opportunity that must absolutely not be lost.

The crucial issues before us and the possibility of facing up to them starting from this angle should therefore be carefully examined. Yet another favourable psychological circumstance is the fact that, approaching as we are the turn of the century, which moreover coincides with the end of the second millennium of the Christian Era, we are probably prepared to 'think big' and raise our sight to ampler horizons, as is required in this period of radical transitions. Also from an objective viewpoint, however, the overall world situation, although highly preoccupying indeed, can be seen with a modicum of rational hope if we want actually to redress it, and provided that we succeed in putting our record with nature straight. It is no doubt true that the complexity of the myriad social, political, economic and military as well as ethico-moral and religious problems and false-problems, in whose tangle we are entrapped, is terribly baffling and maddening. We should nevertheless not despair, for it is no less true that we have knowledge, information and means

more than sufficient to put this problematic under control if we decide to work earnestly together and, to repeat it once more, if we stop fighting against nature.

I want to stress this point. We may feel as if modern society is captive in an artificial labyrinth it has improvidently built and in which, having lost the sense of life, it is meandering hopelessly with the risk of being fatally drawn towards an exit to further confrontation, violence and war. But we can and should reacquire confidence in ourselves, in our moral energies, in our humanity; and recognize that we have every reason to do this, because we possess all the qualities and capabilities required to find instead an opening leading to a better future, 'à la mesure de l'homme'.

At this stage, we must get into our head that, in order to take the right turn towards desirable futures, the first thing to do is to establish the human family on healthy, durable ecological foundations, on which it can then be free to build its internal peace and sustainable development.

We must realistically admit that, for the time being, there is no other way to attain higher human objectives at the indispensable global level. While peace with the world environment, much difficult as its attainment may be, is a target not impossible to propose, and one which is likely to familiarize people with the practice of cross-border cooperations, peace among humans unfortunately does not for the moment yield to any direct approach nor seems to be possible in the very near future.

Even in societies where the practice of violence is not widespread, the political and social atmosphere is too bitter and tense to be changed easily; and in the international arena the relations are so strained and so conflictual, that no great hope can be entertained that an effort of pacification will produce substantial results in the matter of a few years or even a decade. The well-entrenched industrial, military and ideological interests, and not least some scientific interests as well, which prosper in the current climate of violence and have as their 'raison d'être' the production, trade and use of instruments of violence, would certainly counteract such an effort with all the licit and illicit means at their disposal — which have repeatedly proved to be truly formidable. Frontal attacks on them are probably destined to fail miserably, as they did in the past.

A large coalition of forces can on the contrary be built in defence of nature and be successful. To improve our relations with the environment is an objective which can in fact command popular as well as scientific support, and which may have also the virtue of mobilizing active contributions from the thousands if not millions of spontaneous groups of citizens which are mushrooming all over the place to protect a natural area, safeguard a lake or an estuary, rescue some endangered species or, more generally, raise the quality of life of a valley or a city.

not to speak of all those who devote themselves to helping the hungry and destitute of the world.

The rallying point that is proposed would thus be in the same direction in which they are all moving, but at a much higher level because, as already said, it would concern nothing less than the relations between our swelling humankind and the limited and probably already dwindling life-supporting capacity of the earth. A sufficient critical mass of motivated and committed men and women can in all probability be therefore gathered across all frontiers under this banner, many of them being just ordinary people otherwise apathetic but who can instead be motivated and become enthused by being given an opportunity of participating in a well-designed global enterprise to save the earth.

Given the lacerating divisions and rivalries existing within the human community, a good strategy is to try first to establish an outside climate of harmony and non-violence in its broad relations with the natural environment. Also the governments and peoples who bitterly compete in other fields can probably be won over to cooperate in an undertaking aimed at improving their global habitat.

One of the tactical objectives of this strategy is to show the large-scale damage made by the indiscriminate use of human power to exploit and over-exploit the world resources, and the need to adopt instead policies of conservation to ensure the earth's capacity to support human life and sustain development.

Another objective is to impress on everybody, but particularly on people who for interest or passion obstruct the way to peace, that mutual understanding, solidarity and cooperation in the face of the great problems of our age not only pay more than going it alone but also represent a vital imperative if a worsening of global situations is to be avoided.

The initial move in this strategy would be to place squarely before world public opinion and its leaders the dramatic dilemmas of this end of the century.

As the world population will grow to reach six and more billion in less than twenty years, how can good old earth accommodate all these people, and then assure all of them, also in the poor and already overcrowded regions of the Third World, a life of modest well being and dignity if nowadays almost one billion people live near or below the poverty line?

In other words, how can the construction of the immense new physical infrastructures and the more than doubling of the world economy, required to settle and serve this outsize population, be carried out while at the same time safeguarding the world natural environments which are essential to sustain the entire humankind on a permanent basis?

What tragic consequences would our generations, who beget so many children and their children too,

have to suffer if ever larger human multitudes could not be settled decently on this one and only planet, or if to settle them the very natural wherewithal of their life would be irremediably impaired?

These problems are overwhelming, but must nevertheless be faced. They are also extremely complex, but to understand them we may perhaps choose as point of entry into their maze the major constraint we know to exist, which is represented by the fact that the part of the planet fit for human habitation is substantially limited, and already largely occupied and intensively exploited. If the settlement of the additional populations should take place disorderly, probably large sections of the best agricultural lands would be wildly urbanized, and other areas laid to waste, thus further reducing the already scarce availability of good soils in many regions. Who could then stop people who desperately need space, land and food, but do not have them, to try and grab them by any means, including the force of arms? No doubt several other and often conflicting exigencies must be considered, but the question of land—which is the most finite of all finite resources — is capital.

It seems logical that the first step of a global conservation strategy for peace and development should be the preparation, as soon as possible and at the highest level of knowledge and information available, of a broad-line feasibility study of integral space and land use, management and conservation, region by region, for the world as a whole.

The purpose being that of establishing an overall framework for further enquiries and thinking, the study should not go into great detail, although the lands of the planetary human habitat should be seen and appraised both in their present state, with their natural endowment (character of the soil, plant and animal life, water, climate, etc.) and human artifacts, and with regard to their potential for development. The conclusion will probably have the form of an annotated inventory of humankind's global estate compared with the expected needs and accompanied by a series of considerations, suggestions and guidelines for one and all to reflect on what is necessary to keep the planet in livable condition at a time when a much larger human family will have to live in it.

What is more important is the capacity this study, I believe, will have to spark off a process whereby all of us, who have the good or the bad venture of living at these hinges of history, will be interested in taking an all-embracing look at ourselves and our habitat in the light of the realities of this time, and thus hopefully understand that global solidarity and cooperation are the only means to open ways to the future. If this is going to happen, it will be much easier to realize that peace in the ecological sense is likely to lead to peace in the political sense too and, thus, is the first and foremost imperative we must abide with from now on.

AURELIO PECCEI

The arms race

ALEXANDER KING

WHILE war and extensive violence are seen as monstrous examples of man's inhumanity to man, there is insufficient attention paid to such activities as criminal waste of resources — human, material, cultural and of energy. Even in times of peace, war and the building of armaments consume enormous quantities of human resources and materials which are thus not available for purposes of constructive development. It is stated that the diversion of even half of the military budgets of peacetime to development objectives would make possible the solution of most of the world's economic and many of its social problems, not only of the Third World, but also of the industrialized countries. It is difficult to

understand how the world can tolerate this waste of resources in the face of extensive hunger, poverty and underdevelopment which themselves generate violence and war. One can go further and state that the arms build-up causes in peacetime, albeit indirectly, almost as much hardship and human suffering as war itself.

It is the purpose of this brief paper to give some sense of the dimensions of this waste and to look at the difficulties of reconverting the resources wasted, should a major reduction in armaments take place.

Disarmament and development are normally viewed as quite separate issues, particularly at the national level, where it appears axiomatic that the maintenance of

A paper submitted at the Helsinki Conference of the Club of Rome, June, 1984.

adequate military power is an unsailable priority, given contemporary political realities, while its relationship to development appears too vague and remote to be considered. However, it is interesting to remember that the 1969 session of the U.N. General Assembly debated a rather pathetic agenda item which proposed to governments that they should devote each year, one day's military expenditure within the national budget to 'easing the suffering of mankind'. Of course, no agreement was reached.

The extent of resource consumption for military purposes is very difficult to quantify, to a large extent due to secrecy but, also, in many instances, to the fact that the relevant data are not isolated in the general statistics.

The simplest measure of the total resource consumption for military purposes is the financial expenditure of the nations. In 1980 this was around \$ 500 billion and is said now to be about \$ 650 billion. This represents a four-fold increase during the post war period and a twentyfive-fold escalation since the beginning of the century. Figures of this order of magnitude are very difficult to appreciate in perspective. Some comparisons may therefore be useful. It has been pointed out, for instance, that for many years, annual military expenditure of the world was comparable to the combined G.N.P. of all the countries of Latin America and Africa added together; again, these expenditures are about 19 times that of official development aid provided by the OECD countries. The annual budget of UNICEF is equivalent to about four hours of world military expenditure; the elimination of smallpox through WHO action took ten years, but cost under \$ 100 million — less than the cost of developing a more advanced version of a small air-to-air missile. Essential items include water at an acceptable quality for all developing countries, estimated at \$ 7 billion, family planning and maternal health services at \$ 2 billion, primary schools throughout the Third World, about \$ 5 billion and planet-wide clean air for \$ 5 billion.

It cannot be assumed, of course, that if military expenditures were greatly reduced, governments would spend the savings on such constructive projects; much of it would go, no doubt, to reduce taxation. Nevertheless, these illustrations are a comment on the existing priorities in the world. The opportunity costs of military expenditure are enormous.

World military expenditure amounts at present to about \$ 100 for every man, woman and child on the earth. While the per capita expenditure is much higher in developed than in developing countries, the disparities in the overall income per head is still greater, so that these military costs bear more heavily on the developing countries which can afford it less. The comparison of military expenditure with major economic aggregates is often used to convey some impression of the economic burden of militarism. Data here are rather unreliable, but it may be useful to quote some estimates of military expenditure as a percentage of total government expenditure. For the world as a whole the aggregate figure is around 22.4 per cent, with about the same percentage for North America; that for Europe is over 24 per cent as it is for the Middle East; Latin American and African countries spend around 10 per cent.

We come now to the question of the international trade in arms, without comment on the morality of this activity, which has become a matter of general public concern. Once again, the data are too uncertain to make definite statements as to the magnitude of the flow. Firstly, the arms trade is not specifically designated in the international trade statistics and, secondly, the value of military equipment transferred through military aid and similar schemes is not openly admitted and impossible to ascertain in detail.

Nevertheless, estimates of the commercial, in contrast to the political arms trade have been made by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, SIPRI and by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, ACDA, which give some indication of the order

of magnitude. The ACDA figures, given below, do not include construction, technical services and associated training activities which are considerable in view of the lack of infrastructure in many of the purchasing countries. Realistic figures should be bigger, by about 10 per cent than those quoted, to allow for this.

ACDA estimate of the value of trade in arms (millions of \$ in current prices)

Year	Developed Countries	Developing Countries	Total
1974	3,380	8,370	11,750
1975	3,510	9,090	12,600
1976	4,170	12,230	16,400
1977	4,115	15,185	19,300
1978	3,910	16,690	20,600

The available information for more recent years indicates that the trade remains buoyant and, taking into account the associated technical services, SIPRI suggests that in 1980 the global traffic in military goods and services was somewhere near \$ 35 billion.

In any case, it is indisputable that international trade in arms is of major importance in economic as well as in political terms. The trade is dominated by four countries, the United States, the Soviet Union, France and the United Kingdom which, together, account for about 80 per cent of the world trade, while four other European countries, Czechoslovakia, West Germany, Italy and Poland provide a further 10 per cent. The economic benefit of arms exports for these countries is considerable in relation to foreign currency earnings, employment and in providing a degree of stability within their own defence industries.

It is striking what a large proportion of the total arms imports go to the developing countries. For the 1970s as a whole, their share of the whole was approximately 75 per cent. This tragic situation is hardly surprising, considering the extremely limited capacity for the manufacture of modern weapons and the fact that virtually all the wars of recent decades have been in the Third World. SIPRI points out that about

one third of all the weapons imported by developing countries went to five Middle East countries, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria. It would seem that in the late 1970s the non-OPEC developing countries may have been devoting up to \$ 10 billion annually to the purchase of arms. This represents a strong flow of wealth from the poor to the rich and is especially harmful since it represents a massive loss of foreign exchange, shortage of which is amongst the most serious obstacles to rapid economic growth and development in the Third World.

A second aspect of waste, inherent in the arms race, is the extent of material resources consumed in comparison with their civilian use. An important UN report on Disarmament and Development (A/36/356 of October 1981) estimated the consumption of a selection of minerals as a percentage of total world use. The following is an extract: aluminium 6.3; copper 11.1; iron ore 5.1; lead 8.1; silver 6.0; nickel 6.3; mercury 4.5; tin 5.1; chromium 3.9. These percentages may not appear dramatic, but the report points out that in the case of aluminium, copper and nickel, the estimated global consumption for military purposes is greater than the demand for these minerals for all purposes by Africa, Asia and Latin America combined.

The use of petroleum for military purposes is between 5 per cent and 6 per cent of total world consumption which is close to half of that of all Third World countries.

A further and most significant area of waste inherent in the arms race, is that of military research. Technological innovation, based on discoveries in the scientific research laboratories is generally agreed to be one of the main impulsors of economic growth and industrial progress. The corresponding importance of such innovation in the military field has been staggeringly and disastrously great, even if one neglects the phenomenon of the nuclear development. It has led to a level of sophistication in military technology, said to be several times greater than that in civil development. If there were no military research and development, no major new weapons would be

produced and improvements in conventional arms would be marginal.

As it is, research has transformed the nature of war and increased its danger, and the extent of destruction it would cause, by several orders of magnitude. The causes of war and the motivations which trigger it, appear to be unchanged over the millennia, as apparently also does the human wisdom which orders our affairs, but the power of the weapons in the hands of aggressive men has multiplied a million-fold. This is the kernel of our predicament and the reason to fear for the survival of the human race.

Military research has provided innumerable weapons and systems of incredible sophistication which impel the arms race and maintain its momentum. The research and development projects of today become the deadly and expensive weapons of tomorrow in an escalation of armaments in which technological sophistication is more important than the sheer volume of hardware. New scientific discoveries quickly lead to technological breakthroughs which are rapidly incorporated in the new weapons and new systems of defence and offence and the tempo of innovation is encouraged to be as fast as possible by the fear of falling behind in the technological race.

Thus, technological advances in the armaments of one superpower are immediately countered by improvements in the strike capacity of the other in an endless chain of action and reaction, at a barely manageable rate, compounding the uncertainties and racing ahead of both strategy and tactics.

Technological superiority has therefore become the main preoccupation of both the superpowers and the difficulty of evaluating and balancing the effectiveness of the whole range of new weapon systems of both sides underlines the fallacy that military equilibrium can be either perceived or maintained. The sophistication and complexity of the new military technology makes it impossible for the lay person to assess the situation and can lead all too easily to quite mistaken or irrelevant suggestions towards

disarmament by peace movements and individuals.

Likewise, it greatly complicates the business of political assessment and of efforts to control the arms race through negotiation. Political decision-makers are hardly better placed than the man in the street to understand the significance of the various systems pressed by their advocates and are, indeed, extremely vulnerable to acceptance of advice from advisers who may have their own special interests. Understanding of these matters in real detail is in the hands and minds of small groups of cognoscente whose esoteric arguments are hardly understandable to the layman, private or political. Indeed the nuclear and the conventional arms races are beyond the control of political leaders everywhere.

The cost of military research and development is enormous but, once again, we have no precise figures. For example, the expenditures of the countries of the Warsaw Pact are not publicly known. There is difficulty also in distinguishing clearly between the military and civilian components in some budgets such as those for space research. The estimates of SIPRI and other bodies suggest that the present world annual rate of expenditure on military research and development is around \$ 50 billion, or about 10 per cent of total military expenditure. Taking inflation into account, world military R & D costs increased by 60 per cent during the 1960s and by about a further 20 per cent during the 1970s; judging by present plans for increased overall military expenditure, R & D costs are likely to soar again during the present decade.

The finance devoted by governments to military research and development is a large fraction of their overall R & D budgets. For the world as a whole, it averages about 40 per cent; for countries such as the USA and the USSR, it amounts to more than half. SIPRI estimates also that the research input of products is much greater in the military than in the civil sectors; in the United States, United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany, the average military product is said to

be about 20 times as research intensive as that in the civilian market.

Information on the numbers of scientists and engineers engaged in military research and development is even more sketchy than the financial data. SIPRI estimated that 400,000 individuals were so engaged in the 1970s and later estimates suggest a figure now of about 500,000. This would mean that about 45 per cent of the world's research scientists are engaged in military pursuits, or, if only physicists and engineering scientist are counted, well over half of these categories. The research cadres thus form a formidable component of the military-industrial complex and a tremendous diversion of the world's brainpower from constructive to destructive ends.

Special considerations apply to the relationship between military research and the economy. It has to be remembered that most of the discoveries of fundamental science, where they lead to practical application, find a use in the growth of the economy as well as for destructive purposes and that many if not most of the technologies have a role in both civil and military sectors. This means that technological development, successfully undertaken for economic reasons, may have military uses also—and vice versa.

The spin-off from military innovations into the civil economy can be important and many examples appeared from the R & D efforts of World War II, as, for example, in the development of television and computers, in radar, air navigation and many other directions. Such examples are often quoted in part justification for military R & D expenditure. However, if the value of such spin-off successes is calculated in relation to the total costs of their development, the yield of the investment would appear trivial.

These inter-relationships between military research and the economy do not conceal the fact that expenditure in the former represents a monstrous waste of manpower, skills, ingenuity and resources. If the total talent and manpower working on military research were to be diverted to constructive ends, and given the same magnitude of resources, the world

would be transformed. To assume, however, that such a reorientation of world scientific effort would, in fact, be achieved in the unlikely event of total disarmament, would be the ultimate in naivety.

Some other aspects of military expenditure should be touched on. It is essentially inflationary. As the 1980 'World Military and Social Expenditures' report stated, military expenditure overheats the economy by generating more spending income than there are goods and services to absorb it. It has a depressing effect on investment which, in turn, tends to decrease the rate of economic growth and prolongs inflationary pressures. Then, again, military expenditure is capital intensive; it creates relatively few jobs per unit of investment and diverts capital from more productive uses. It seems wrong, therefore to contend, as some do, that the arms race is useful as a means of providing employment.

The overall relationship between military expenditure and the economy is highly controversial. It is argued, for instance, that military expenditure during the depression of the 1930s was good for the international economy as it removed people from the employment queues. However, the extent to which the arms race was a main cause of reduced unemployment, remains in doubt. The problems of the 1980s are very different with the present blend of stagnation and inflation, with high military budgets which, rather than revitalising a depressed economy, seem to feed inflation.

It is probably true that all societies engaged in a high level of military effort are pre-empting resources which might have been used for socially productive ends. If military spending does have a stimulating influence on the economy of industrialized countries, one would expect to find stagnation to be more prevalent in those countries where military activities have a less dominant role. A recent study of some eighteen industrialized countries shows that just the opposite is the case; those with a high military expenditure/GNP ratio were found to be growing more slowly than those with a lower ratio. Japan is a dra-

matic example of a country with little military expenditure and high economic growth and productivity, while the post war economic successes of the Federal Republic of Germany point in the same direction.

It should be added that the economic growth effects of military spending in the centrally planned economies appear to be no less negative than those for the market economies. In both cases the economic damage done by escalation of the arms race is cumulative and the longer it is allowed to persist, the more difficult will it be to rectify.

The waste of world resources and the diversion of human skill and effort which results from the incapacity of the nation States to live in harmony is thus monstrously large. Estimates of the total number of people engaged directly or indirectly in military activities, vary between 50 and 100 million, whether they may be in the armed services, in the production of military equipment, in the defence ministries or in the military research establishments. World industry is producing annually about \$ 150 billion of military products. This huge effort to secure the destruction of potential enemies appears, as we have seen, to contribute little to the economy, yet it has become an integral and continuing part of the economic structure.

What then would be the effect if, by a miracle, the noble goal of abandoning the armaments race were to be achieved. Stop the orders to the arms factories, close the plants, get rid of the military scientists, demobilize the servicemen and we would all be prey to international collapse and chaos. The burden of unemployment, already endemic in the Third World and reaching high proportions in the industrialized countries would reach catastrophic dimensions if a further hundred million workers and scientists were added to the unemployment lines. And all this when we are on the brink of a new wave of industrial revolution when with the automation of manufacture there will be a demand for new markets,

new skills, new occupations and, indeed, an utterly new society. Yet the Club of Rome is right to stress the interaction of world problems within the tangle of the problematique, of which the arms race is an unruly but integral part.

However, it is fortunate — and we say this with great bitterness — that complete or very substantial disarmament is extremely unlikely to come upon us suddenly. There is therefore the possibility, if we take a normative approach to the world future, of a gradual conversion of the arms race economy into a sound and sustainable world order. A prerequisite to such an approach must be world acceptance of the need to couple disarmament to development, not only of the Third World, but of the planet as a whole. By a gradual defusing of the situation, the arms race could be wound down and detente re-established: this would have to be accompanied by a simultaneous move, consciously, and with deliberate speed towards a sustainable economic, social and political order.

In the hope of disarmament, it is necessary that studies should be made, both internationally and within each country, of the magnitude and nature of the redeployment and reconversion problems. This is not the place for a detailed analysis of these matters which have already had considerable discussion by specialists, but too little public exposure.

Let it be remarked, however, that considerable and positive experience exists on the reconversion of industry at the end of the great wars; in the United States, for example, some 10 million people were demobilized from the armed forces between 1945 and 1948, when the defence budget declined by about \$ 40 billion. At the same time, defence-related employment in industry dropped from over 12 million people to under one million. During this time unemployment never exceeded 4 per cent. Similarly, here is valuable experience in the creation of viable international mechanisms for post-war economic reconstruction as exemplified by the Marshall Plan.

While discussions of disarmament at the United Nations have raised only vain hopes, that body has done excellent work on the means and possibilities of conversion and re-deployment which deserves careful attention. As early as 1952, Edgar Faure, at that time Prime Minister of France, put forward a proposal for the creation of a mutual fund for Development and Mutual Assistance as part of a comprehensive scheme for the reallocation of finance freed by disarmament, for peaceful purposes. Many other such proposals have been discussed, including the disarmament dividend approach in which a proportion, such as 10 per cent of the funds set free by disarmament in a particular year, would be devoted to world development. This is all very enlightened, but who listens?

All this indicates that a planned transition from the arms build-up to a sustainable and peaceful situation is possible if the political will to do so existed. If, as suggested earlier, the arms race is out of the control of the politicians, it is only as a result of pressures from an informed and understanding public that conditions propitious for the transition can be generated. It is therefore essential to achieve universal awareness, not only that it is in the interest of all people to work for the survival of the race in face of the threat of nuclear extinction, but also that in doing so, there would be immense benefits of all kinds by the stopping of the haemorrhage of the arms race. It would also have to be recognized that the attainment of these benefits would entail sacrifices in terms of existing attitudes of national chauvinism, narrow and immediate self-interest and power ambitions arising from individual and collective greed and selfishness.

Finally, a few words should be added concerning the vested interests for the maintenance of the war machine. President Eisenhower's farewell speech about the power and dangers of the industry-military complex is still remembered. This complex of interests in maintaining the arms build-up is certainly no less dangerous today. Kenneth Boulding has recently pointed out

the paradox that the national defence organizations of the rival powers are actually in de-facto co-operation with each other and in competition with their own civilian populations. Thus, increase in the American defence budget almost automatically permits an extension of the corresponding Russian complex and vice versa, while each such expansion is an increased burden and danger to the civilian population in question. As Boulding says, 'the military is acting as an enormous black hole, sucking up high technology and letting practically nothing out.'

An important element of this powerful political lobby is the large group of military research scientists referred to above, who rely entirely on defence money for support. These scientists are, in the main, outside the general international scientific community and, although many of them must be outstandingly brilliant as the devilish success of their products indicates, they are largely anonymous. Being outside the conventional system of science which depends for its awards on the publication of original work and the approbations of peers, their advancement and recognition within their own circles comes from success in devising more and more sophisticated military devices and in assuring their adoption. They are thus a critical group for the continuation of the arms race.

In addition, vast bureaucracies have grown up to deal with military matters in which there are more civilians depending on military budgets than troops in uniform. Thus the scientists and bureaucrats join with the defence industries and the arms salesmen to form a scientific-bureaucratic-military-industrial complex, whose interest it is to maintain military budgets, agitating for the use of more complex and expensive technological advances for military purposes. The political power of this group is so strong as to be virtually irresistible. We are being edged towards the ultimate nuclear disaster by the sheer momentum of military technology and governments are almost as much victims of this force, albeit willingly, as the rest of us.

International security structure

HELIO JAGUARIBE

THE two superpowers are presently vacillating between two strategic views, whose predominance alternates according to internal political tendencies and to the perception that each has of the behaviour of the other.

The first view emphasizes the ultimate impossibility of a military victory in the nuclear age. Any major conflict will become nuclear, whatever its place of origin and its initial form. And any major nuclear conflict will bring about the mutual extermination of the superpowers. The only solution, therefore, is to preserve peace and, for rendering it possible, to adopt appropriate policies and measures of duly supervised mutual arms control, such as Salt I and Salt II.

The second view stresses that technological breakthroughs and

other measures, both offensive and defensive, can bring about a net superiority to one of the superpowers. Technological breakthroughs imply either in an exterminating surprise first-strike (now, inconceivable) or in large and effective defensive measures (now also inconceivable).

Among the conditions that, besides a technological breakthrough, could lead to a net superiority, is the destabilization of the economy and consequently of the socio-political structure of one of the superpowers (as in the case of the Soviet Union, according to some U.S. experts), induced by the excessive weight of military investments. The other set of destabilizing conditions might be the loss of sufficient consensus, domestically and internationally — with its paralyzing effects — for the policies of one of

the superpowers (as in the case of the U.S., according to some Soviet experts).

A third possibility would be a 'limited nuclear war' fought in Europe, and bringing about a 'theater victory' that, although defining the supremacy of the winner, would neither devastate the core area of any of the superpowers, nor destroy the domestic regime and the nuclear capability of the losing party.

A fourth possibility would be a 'space war' by which one of the superpowers would try to destroy, in the outer space, the satellites and other spacecrafts of the enemy, therefore acquiring a net superiority for its surveying and warning capabilities. As this hypothesis is still technologically remote, it will not be further discussed in the present paper.

Whatever the means by which a net strategic superiority would be achieved by one of the superpowers, the consequence would be, according to the supporters of that view, either the compulsory acceptance, by the weaker power, of the impositions of the stronger, or its ultimate military defeat in the actual case of a major confrontation.

The oscillation of the superpowers between the two conflicting strategic views, precedingly mentioned, implies an increasing danger of war. As the arms control view never succeeds to prevail in a stable and enduring form in both superpowers, it tends in each of them to be succeeded by frenetic periods of arms build-up, under the assumption, real or imaginary (as now, with the Reagan Administration), that the concerned superpower would be strategically lagging behind the other and would urgently need to catch up. Such rearmament movements in one of the superpowers are immediately perceived as an unacceptable threat by the other, leading it to renewed rearmament efforts.

Two conclusions, therefore, have to be drawn from the present conditions. The first is that discontinued efforts at arms control have, ultimately, the effect of aggravating the rearmament race. The second con-

clusion, as is widely acknowledged by all experts, is that a continuous rearmament process involving (1) an ever more critical reduction of the time span given to each of the superpowers to realize whether or not an attack by the other is being launched on it and involving, at the same time (2) the increasingly self-guided automatization of second-strike responses, is rendering the probability of a war by accident much larger (as it has been shown by many false electronic warnings) in a trend that will make it practically inescapable, in a non-remote future.

It should be pointed out, moreover, that the views about the eventual destabilization of any of the superpowers, whatever the possibilities for the actual occurrence of such result, contain, at their own conceptual level, a great fallacy. It consists in supposing that a superpower affected by increasing processes of destabilization would passively endure such a process. Contrarywise, there is every reason to assume that the prospect of its own destabilization would constitute an unacceptable threat to any of the superpowers, inducing them to equate such threat to the threat of nuclear aggression, with all its war inducement effects.

In the case of a limited nuclear war, the prospects are more obscure. The losing superpower would be strongly inclined to accept an accommodation with the winner, in order to limit its losses and to preserve, with its territorial integrity, the possibilities of maintaining, on the one hand, its own domestic regime and, on the other hand, its basic nuclear capability.

According to unpredictable circumstances, however — including unreasonable exigencies of the winner — the losing power might be led to try compensatory advantages, striking some strategic targets in the core territory of the winner. In such case, retaliatory responses of the winner might unleash a major nuclear confrontation.

The Salt II treaty, signed in Vienna on June 18th, 1979, is the last attempt to achieve a relatively general stabilization of the arms

race, founded on the principle of maintaining a strategic parity between the superpowers. The treaty did not exclude new technical-strategic developments but aimed, at least, to stop new quantitative developments. A ceiling was established of 2,400 launchers for each party, foreseeing a quantitative limitation of 2,250, starting on 31 December, 1981 and several other prohibitions were adopted.

Strongly opposed in the U.S. by the conservatives, the Treaty has not been ratified by the American Congress and the Reagan Administration, although in practice still observing it (as well as the Soviets), has proposed a new formulation (START). Reagan claims that the Soviets, in the last years, have invested increasingly more than the U.S. in strategic defence (allegedly, in 1982, \$ 273 billion against \$ 195 billion by the U.S.) and that their 2,498 strategic launchers significantly surpass the American capability, with 1,918.

It is around such alleged imbalance — whose fallacy is the omission of the qualitative aspects of the concerned weaponry — that the controversy concerning the European theatre had taken place in Geneva, in 1983 Reagan's 'zero option' presented to the Soviets an alternative: either NATO recovers its power balance through the deployment in Europe of 572 new launchers (108 Pershings II and 464 cruise missiles) or the Soviets accept to dismantle 333 of their SS-20s, everywhere in Soviet territory, as well as 280 of their aging SS-4 and SS-5 missiles.

The Soviets refused that proposal, mostly in view of the pre-existing nuclear capabilities of France and Great Britain. They gave, in exchange, indications that they could remove from Europe 380 launchers, with 580 warheads and dismantle their SS-4 and SS-5, keeping, however, 140 SS-20s as a balance to the French and British missiles. The non acceptance of the Soviet proposal ultimately brought the Geneva meeting to failure.

Any honest and objective assessment of the present situation brings

about two conclusions: (1) war will be practically inevitable before the end of the century, and even in the course of this decade, if a consistent new approach is not promptly taken for the consolidation of peace; (2) a consistent new approach for the consolidation of peace requires, at the same time, the serious mobilization, at the international level, of other legitimate parties, besides the superpowers and, at the domestic level, of all social strata, as well as a global understanding of world problems, going much deeper and embracing much wider questions than sheer matters of arms control.

The basic requirement for a stable and durable world peace is the non-existence of conditions, for any country or group of countries, to use international violence as a credible individual means to achieve its own goals. The non-existence of conditions for the international use of violence is a situation that can be achieved either by a very large diffusion of the means for international use of violence or by the concentration of such means under the control of an effective and representative international authority.

The wide diffusion of the means for international violence, such as it occurred in Europe's Middle Age, does not prevent the existence of local wars but renders empirically very improbable the occurrence of a world wide war. The other alternative is more comprehensive. The submission of the major means for international violence to the control of an effective and representative international authority would eliminate the risks of wars insofar as that authority remains both effective and truly international.

The wide diffusion of the means for international violence does not look to be either an achievable or a desirable goal in contemporary conditions. As a matter of fact, however, the arguments against the 'diffusion' of nuclear capabilities are not strictly correct and bear the imprint of the self-interest of the superpowers. If it were actually possible to achieve a state of wide credible diffusion of nuclear capabilities (which is currently a practi-

cal impossibility), world peace would be better preserved. As in a contemporary version of the Middle Age, no individual nation or group of nations would be able to impose its individual will on the world as a whole.

It is obvious, however, that such credible diffusion could not be currently realized. Moreover, the Middle Age analogy should not be pushed too far because, in view of the devastating effects of nuclear artifacts, even local wars, in contemporary conditions, would have already unacceptable genocidal effects, not speaking of the tendency to propagate.

The alternative of an effective and truly representative international authority remains, therefore, the only valuable one. Such authority is, ultimately, the only way by which a stable and durable world peace can be reliably maintained.

The idea of an international regulation, submitting all the States of the world to a legal international order, under the legitimate control of an international authority, is both an old one and the really only rational solution up to now devised for such a purpose. Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' of 1795 and Norberto Bobbio's 'The Problem of the War and the Ways to Peace' of 1979, could be mentioned as two old and recent standard references on the subject.

In view of such a basic assumption, two main questions have to be considered. The first, of a theoretical character, concerns the basic analytical requirements for the constitution and preservation of a representative international authority, able to keep under its control the major means for international violence. The second, of a more practical character, concerns the basic requirements for a transition from the present situation of the world to one into which such international authority could be established and maintained.

An effective and representative territorial authority results from the combination of the concentration of effective political power, over a given territory, supported by the

possession, by such power, of widely acknowledged legitimacy.

Historically, the modern States have originated in Europe, since the end of the Middle Ages, by the integration under several forms (predominantly by violence), promoted by a leading territorial or dynastic agency of former feudal authorities, formerly enjoying variable levels of autonomy, into larger unified States, mostly by the incorporation of peoples of the same culture into a national State. Only later the new larger States, mostly as national States, have acquired growing rates of true representativeness through the universalization of democratic legitimacy.

In the conditions of the contemporary world, the establishment of an effective and representative international authority would require the effective transfer to such authority, by the national States, of the highest levels of political power according to procedures widely acknowledged as legitimate, at least among the leading world powers.

The international authority would have to be a collective system, integrated by renewable delegates, in order to be representative of the world political realities. It would need to differentiate a legislative, from an executive and a judiciary branch, in order to fit the formal structure of contemporary political processes.

The international authority, on the other hand, would need to have attributions of a super-federal or confederal character. It is obvious, since Kant, that the contemporary world cannot be internationally regulated and governed in the form of a super-unitary State. Even if several or even a majority of the present national States are not likely to have a very long life, they will survive, for a relatively long time, as the territorial regulating agencies of the local affairs. A super-federal or confederal arrangement, therefore, looks to be the necessary way by which may be regulated the truly common international interests of mankind — involving things, such as the effective maintenance of peace, the preservation of the ecosphere, the regulation

of health questions and of vital international systems or questions, in the domains of economy, communication, transportation, etc.

It is practically impossible and of little value, even in a speculative way, to try, in the present conditions, to inquire about the ways by which an effective and representative international authority could be constituted and the institutional arrangements by which it could be regulated. The historical analogical precedents concerning the formation of modern States or of world empires are only of limited avail. The predominant use of violence in the formation of the European modern national States, cannot be extrapolated to the contemporary conditions.

To a certain extent, the formation, as a final consequence of the Second War, of the two world power-blocs, under the respective leadership of the U.S. and the Soviet Union, represents the conceptual and empirical limits of the possibility of historical extrapolations. The non-viability of a military solution, as formerly indicated in this brief study, imposes, precisely, a limit to the validity of certain historical experiences. A consensual procedure, therefore, is a necessary requirement in the present international conditions for the formation of an international authority, even if that procedure would involve the active participation of only a limited number of leading world powers. How such a target can be attained is a matter that may be discussed only in a much more advanced historical phase of the process.

The present international world order is characterized by the fact that it results from the unstable and varying balance of the interaction of about 160 formally independent States, pursuing their national interest in the international arena, according to their respective self-perception and within very different limits of effective capabilities and self-determination. That order is unstable because it is neither submitted to an enforceable and legitimate international regulation, nor is it the expression of a sufficiently stable

balance of power among the participants.

The States that interact in the world arena present very different levels of effective capabilities and are submitted to distinct basic conditions. Paramount among those is their rough differentiation into three distinct 'worlds'. The 'First World', including the industrial societies, mostly of the Northern Hemisphere, regulated by a basically free market economy, integrates as a whole the 'American bloc'. The 'Second World', including a variety of States, many presenting high levels of industrialization, regulated by centrally controlled economies, is integrated as a whole into the 'Soviet-bloc'.

The 'Third World', including a still larger variety of States, some very close to full industrialization, most of them being still agrarian societies, diversely submitted to market or centralized economies, more often than not under authoritarian rule, has in common some of the basic features of underdevelopment. Those States tend to non-alignment vis-a-vis the two blocs. Some of those States, however, are both members of the Third World and aligned either with the Soviet bloc, such as Cuba or the American bloc, such as Honduras.

The factors that induce the participation of several of those States into one of the two competing power blocs are very diverse for each bloc, aside from diversities at the level of the individual States.

Roughly speaking, the American bloc is integrated by societies where a majority of the respective people want such association, because they think it suits their economic system, it corresponds to their main values and it represents, as they see it, an essential condition for their international security. The Soviet bloc also, roughly speaking, is integrated by societies organized under the self-imposed control of a single party, officially professing a Marxist-Leninist ideology and where a self-imposed party elite, reproduced by closed cooptational procedures, is intimately dependent, on the one hand, on the continued enforcement of the referred ideology and, on the

other hand, on the external support of the Soviet Union.

In spite of its instability, as formerly indicated, the present international world order manifests a strong propensity to maintain its main characteristics, such as the 'three worlds' formerly mentioned, the strategic balance between the two power blocs and the domination of each imperial center over its own periphery.

The resilience of that unstable order is due to two main factors. One is the fact that the superpowers enjoy the necessary conditions to preserve their own primacy. The second factor is that the countries integrating the two power blocs — and so contributing to the maintenance of a non-regulated balance of power — either tend to consider such integration as necessary for the preservation of their most fundamental interests (as in the case of NATO), or are submitted to a regime of political control dependent on such integration (as in the case of the Warsaw Pact).

Notwithstanding the strong resilience of the present international order, important factors of change are operating in it.

Some of these factors are connected with developments inside the Third World. The breaking of China with the Soviet Union and its continued development through an autonomous way constitutes a major factor of change. The overall development of some large Third World countries namely Brazil, Mexico and India, in spite of temporary obstacles such as their current financial troubles, is creating strong new international actors, inherently inclined to an autonomous course.

The more important factors of change, however, are events taking place inside the two power blocs. In the American bloc, the most important of such events is the rapidly growing awareness, in western Europe, that its territory has become the main theater for any limited nuclear confrontation. In the Soviet bloc, besides an equivalent awareness in what concerns the eastern Europeans, there is an additional

awareness that their respective domestic development requires a substantial change of their regimes and of their relationship with the Soviets.

The strategic stalemate between the two superpowers has increasingly induced them—short of an effective but still remote technological breakthrough—to consider ways of preserving their own territories from major devastations, which would ultimately bring about their reciprocal extermination. On account of that the hypothesis of a limited nuclear war has been increasingly considered by the two superpowers. A limited nuclear war would necessarily be waged in Europe. Such a war would have a winner. The loser, in such hypothesis, would tend to accept, within relatively tolerable conditions, the supremacy of the winner, although maintaining its own domestic characteristics and its own nuclear capability. Such hypothesis represents a viable moderate version of 'military victory', without the self-denigrating consequence of mutual annihilation.

The Europeans are increasingly understanding—short of an improbable technological breakthrough or of a now remote prospect of a stable peace—that a limited war in Europe, with its consequent devastation, is becoming the condition for the superpowers to prevent their own mutual extermination.

That awareness is bringing the western Europeans, as a first reaction, to refuse the installation of new missiles in their countries. The development of such awareness, however, will bring about, inevitably, a total revision by the western Europeans of their association in the NATO system as well as of their general relationship with the United States.

Similarly, the East Europeans are increasingly concerned with the development of the limited war strategy, with Europe as the theatre of operation. Moreover, most of the East Europeans are convinced that their domestic regimes need very substantial changes, involving more efficient systems of production and

effective democratic representativeness, both in political and in industrial terms. The whole question is how to manage those affairs in a closed system, in which the stability of the ideology is a necessary basis for the stability of the regimes and of the authorities, and in which the chains linking the several communist parties and their leadership to Moscow are both a requirement for the preservation of power at the national level, and the instrument of dependency, vis a-vis the Soviets.

In the conditions indicated, is there any realistic line of action capable of driving the world in the direction of a stable peace, while it is still possible to prevent a major war?

It is my contention that such line of action may be realistically conceived and implemented. For such purpose one has, initially, to acknowledge, in accordance with the preceding considerations of the present study, that, ultimately, only a truly effective and representative international authority will dispose of the conditions to enforce a stable peace. In the second place, one has also to acknowledge that any changes in the current strategic stalemate must be initiated by actors other than the superpowers. And one has finally to realize that those possible actors, in the present conditions, are the Europeans, particularly—as probable starters of the process—the western Europeans and, among them, the Germans.

The conversion of the superpowers, for the reasons formerly indicated, to the idea of a limited war, necessarily to be fought in Europe, has created in Europe a growing reaction that tends to dominate all parties and to prevail in all major social sectors. It is likely, therefore, that the deployment of new missiles in Europe will be stopped and that, in continuation, the European peace movement, converted into a bipartisan tendency will revise the whole conception of European defence and of the patterns of association of the Europeans with the superpowers.

The basic alternative for the Europeans is the neutralization of

Europe—western and eastern—in a way similar to the former neutralization of Austria. The neutralization of Europe presents the advantage, in addition to its immense contribution to peace, of permitting the negotiated concomitant dissolution of the two confronting military pacts: Nato and Warsaw. Withdrawing from the two pacts, the Europeans would be able strongly to reinforce their economic integration, both in western and in eastern Europe, with growing co-operative links between the two halves.

The neutralization of Europe would not simply mean the exclusion of the limited war hypothesis, with its consequences for Europe, as the theatre of operations. It would directly and indirectly create conditions extraordinarily favourable for the economic recovery and prosperity of the whole area, including eastern Europe. It would render viable, within certain conditions, either the ultimate reunification of Germany or, at least, a stable and close cooperation between the two German States. It would, likewise, make possible—in conditions acceptable to the Soviets—the adoption of long and deeply desired changes in the regimes of eastern Europe, granting them a substantially larger autonomy vis-a-vis the Soviets. And, finally, contrarywise to the current warnings of military advocates, such process would extraordinarily enhance the political strength of Europe, converting it into an effective new major international interlocutor commanding the support of the Third World.

The creation of those new conditions would put into motion new powerful forces in the direction of a reliable peace. Reduced to a strategic confrontation no more shared by the rest of the world and once again involving the inevitable consequence of their mutual annihilation, the two superpowers would experiment with very strong incentives to reach a stable world order. And so would be created the basic conditions for a peaceful process of order by international coexistence, ultimately oriented in the direction of the establishment of a legitimate and effective international authority.

Now is the time

JOHN PLATT

IN the next few years, we will probably make an evolutionary jump to a new global management system. Our great technological developments of the last 40 years, especially in biology, weapons and communications, are transforming the world and are leaving us with no alternative. They are squeezing us into the future like a melon-seed squeezed between the fingers. We are like people on a raft being swept onward through a turbulent rapids, with problems coming at us from every direction. We cannot fight the river but we must paddle furiously and together as new dangers or new opportunities appear.

Many of the new problems are very serious indeed, but the greatest danger of all, the hard rock just ahead, is the danger of the escalating nuclear arms race between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. Neither fear nor elaborate arms-control efforts nor improved weapons nor peace movements have slowed it down. There seems no way now to avoid nuclear catastrophe unless we can develop very quickly a larger framework, some kind of world-wide system for nuclear management and peace-keeping. We need some new arrangement that all the major powers would be willing to adopt simply because it would be so much safer for them than the present arrangements.

The time we may have for doing this is not very long. At the rate things are going, we may pass a point of no return within something like 5 years, by 1989 or so, with breakdown becoming inevitable if we do not make a major reconstruction by that time. Today we may be in a pre-Revolution or pre-Constitution era, somewhat like 1784 or 1914. If we do slide into a nuclear holocaust, it would still mean a global restructuring; any peoples who are left

afterwards will still know how to make nuclear weapons and will still have to create a peace-keeping system in their devastated world. It would be infinitely simpler to do it ahead of time.

After examining the long record of power struggles, the historian, William H. McNeill, puts it this way: 'To halt the arms race, political change appears to be necessary. A global sovereign power willing and able to enforce a monopoly of atomic weaponry could afford to disband research teams and dismantle all but a token number of warheads. Nothing less radical than this seems in the least likely to suffice.' (*The Pursuit of Power*, 1982)

It is curious how many of our best social thinkers and futurists avoid dealing with this catastrophe-or-change turnaround that is so close at hand. They pass on to other problems, or to 'surprise-free' projections of 20-year development, or ultimate global reports, or hoped-for changes in morality or the psyche. But most of these analyses and predictions would be totally upset either by catastrophes or by a revolutionary step-up in global organization. It is the conventional wisdom of 1784 or 1914.

There are others who do deal with the catastrophe problem but who speak and act as though our framework of nation-States will remain uncoordinated indefinitely. This includes not only hawks but doves. Any yielding of sovereignty to a larger management structure is said to be 'out of reach' at present. Whether they urge increased strength, or arms-control treaties, or disarmament, there is no explicit vision of a new global system. No one would deny that the building of any new system will be immensely

difficult, but so are the present fragmentary arms-control efforts.

What frustrates these efforts, the hard core of the catastrophe problem, is the nation-State framework itself. To go back to the raft analogy, we are behaving like paddlers on opposite sides paddling harder and harder against each other instead of having a plan to steer together. The truth is that no arrangement with independent national control of nuclear weapons can be stable or can be steered. As *The Federalist Papers* said 200 years ago, 'A man must be far gone in Utopian speculations who can seriously doubt, that if these States should either be wholly disunited, or only united in partial confederacies, the subdivisions into which they might be thrown would have frequent and violent contests with each other.... To look for a continuation of harmony between a number of independent unconnected sovereignties, situated in the same neighbourhood, would be to disregard the uniform course of human events, and to set at defiance the accumulated experience of ages.... The causes of hostility among nations are innumerable.'

Recently, this kind of instability in competitive interactions has been studied in the laboratory, in the new social-science field of 'non-zero-sum games'. These simulate situations in real life in which both parties may win or lose together, and the arms race is a particular kind of non-zero-sum dilemma of this sort. The instability in such a game has now been demonstrated by thousands of experimental and theoretical studies of conflict and cooperation between individuals and groups who win or lose different amounts with each other. In this kind of game, no matter what either player does, locked-in confrontations become permanent, and escalations will continue indefinitely to a breakdown. It is like children trying to build a tower of blocks indefinitely high, which will eventually collapse, no matter how careful they are.

These are social-interaction laws as inevitable as gravity, unless the game is by-passed by fitting it into some larger framework of communications and cooperative advantage. It is wishful thinking by hawks as

well as doves — whether we start with the armed hostility of balanced forces or with mutual goodwill — to suppose that *any* arrangements between independent nations can get past these theorems so as to remain stable for long.

If we are to move forward, would it not be worth starting a discussion of some larger workable alternative so as to see whether any other arrangement is possible and to make vivid how easy or difficult it might be? There are ways out, as we know from these social-science studies as well as from many cases of successful peace-making in the real world. Locked-in game-theory confrontations can finally be changed if a larger view is imposed, for example, by third-party pressure, re-negotiating the payoffs, or moving to a new system. If we had leadership to begin to think about this question and to debate some possible plans and develop a larger view, it might change our whole framework of discussion; and a step-up to some minimum global nuclear-management system in the immediate future might not be nearly as difficult as we suppose.

Sudden and astonishing step-ups to new levels of organization have happened repeatedly at crisis times in history. Sometimes they are created by empire-builders, sometimes by small alliances. But sometimes they are created by agreement in peacetime, under the leadership of a dedicated group, as in the case of the U.S. Constitution or the partial economic integration of the European Common Market.

With strong leaders and a sound design, a movement toward a better world system today could also take off, because it would be supported by many factors. The U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have many mutual interests besides arms-control. And the worldwide problems of food, health, energy, the monetary system, aviation, communications, environmental protection, the oceans, and space, are too large for even these nations to deal with by themselves. A global technology, the global problems it creates, both makes possible and demands a step-up to a global level of human organization.

But the military nation-State will not disappear by wishing it. Arms and sovereignty have a purpose: to protect people from coercion by others and to strengthen them in pursuing their own interests. In a state of anarchy between nations, they perform the function that government would perform better, trying to protect life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. No group or nation would even conceivably be willing to give up its arms and troops unless some minimum system was already in place that would keep the peace and guarantee these objectives.

The designs of such peace-keeping systems is not impossible. In civil life they are all around us. It took thousands of years, but we have social and political structures today that keep the peace over enormous areas of the world, larger than ever before. Most of them grew very gradually, of course, and it is a very different thing to have to plan a total peace-keeping system that can move into full operation almost immediately. This is why the examples of the U.S. Constitution and the European Common Market are so important, because they show that it can be done.

Nevertheless, any design of a global peace-keeping system that would be adoptable and generally workable from the beginning will require far more than a copy of some older system. It will also need major inputs of what can be called social technical knowledge. There are technical requirements for a self-stabilizing social structural design with democratic or mutual self-management by the parties, just as there are technical requirements for designing the supports of a table or a bridge so that it will be stable under gravity and varying loads.

It is not generally realized how much we have learned in the last few years about social and political feedback and stabilization mechanisms. Great advances have come not only from studies of game-theory, but from experimental and theoretical studies of cybernetics, psychological reinforcement, management theory, theories of demo-

cracy, micromotives and macro-behaviour ('social traps'), and the art and science of negotiation. Our knowledge of social structure and stability goes far beyond what the Federalists knew. This knowledge will be essential in the design of any acceptable and stable peace-keeping system.

There is a widespread ignorance of these stabilization principles that is a defect in many global proposals. A self-governing structure that takes care of the interests of its participants is not an hierarchical pyramid of command, but a complex of interacting feedback loops, like the interacting blood loops and nerve networks of our bodies. It does not necessarily require either a world parliament to debate, or a nuclear autocrat to decide and act, as many writers suppose. Yet, at the same time goodwill and ingenuity are not enough; and strengthening the United Nations is not enough. (The Charter of the U.N. violates rules of stability that were known to the Federalists.)

What is needed at this point is to bring together multinational social and technical study groups to analyze and make proposals for the stabilization and design problem. The aim would be to apply sound feedback and control principles to outline a minimum global nuclear management system, one that would offer equal security to the participating States, protection against terrorists and mad nuclear dictators, and stabilizing feedbacks — 'checks and balances' — with fail-safe mechanisms that could make patriots and conservatives on both sides feel more secure with the system than without it. We need, so to speak, a new Hamilton, Jay, and Madison to come together to write the new Federalist Papers on which a new working Constitution can be securely built.

A design-study group will have to work on hundreds of questions, but underlying them are four general requirements that any peace-keeping management system will need to satisfy if it is to be persuasive to the world. They are principles of stability and acceptability that in fact were emphasized so long ago by the

Federalists, but that have been neglected or violated in many discussions of how to keep the peace. (See 'The Federalists and the Design of Stabilization', in John Platt, *The Step to Man*.)

The first of these requirements for a peace-keeping system is, of course, that it be workable and effective. Its structure must be designed so that the roles and rewards of administrators and personnel lead to almost automatic feedback response adequate against a host of dangers: coups d'état, the rise of Hitlers, or renewed confrontations and escalations, as well as financial crises and bureaucratic rigidity. The system should have a range of time-constants for different needs, from rapid emergency action to long-run deliberation.

An effective feedback system must also be tough-minded, prepared to assume the worst; because, as Hamilton said, men are 'ambitious, vindictive, and rapacious'. 'If men were angels, no government would be necessary.' The checks and balances should be operating to avert problems long before they become serious. Only if it is 'realist' in this sense can such a system convince intelligent conservatives in every country to adopt it. This does not mean that it will operate primarily by last-ditch punishment or retaliation, because this would produce hostilities and dissipate the feelings of security and goodwill that are essential. It must create instead a thousand little continuous pressures and rewards for cooperative behaviour, both of men and nations, of the kind that make any good organization satisfying and effective.

The second requirement of a good design is that it be modifiable. The structure should not be trivially changeable, veering with every mind, but it needs to be open to criticism and adjustment with reasonable speed to revealed imperfections or changed circumstances, if it is not to break down under growing stresses. No system is perfect or can stay perfect for long. And when governments or leaders have initial objections to a particular design, as they always will, it is much easier for

them to adopt it if it offers a clear mechanism for amendment later.

The third requirement is that any new system for global nuclear management, requiring political acceptance by numerous parties, must be an absolute minimum system. There should be nothing in it that is not essential for its effectiveness. Adoption of any workable system is going to be almost if not quite impossible, and every requirement that encroaches unnecessarily on the present interests of the participants should be eliminated.

This also means that individual countries will have to give up, at least within this system, those demands on other countries that have nothing directly to do with the peace-keeping mechanism. This will be one of the hardest concessions for countries to make, and there will have to be other channels through which these important interests can be pursued. But no ideological objections, no refusal to communicate with de facto governments, and no righteous indignation over their past actions or their present corruption or oppression, should be allowed to increase by a single degree the enormous difficulty of adopting any real peace-keeping system.

The fourth requirement is that an adoptable design needs to offer its participants not only a minimum of negatives, but a maximum of positive advantages of personal and national self-interest, both for the present and the future. For the nuclear powers, each side will take immediate delight, of course, in a visible nuclear build-down on the other side; and the world will rejoice with both of them.

With a peace-keeping system that we can begin to trust, there will also be new opportunities for unhampered development in every country, and a world-wide surge of hope and economic improvement. The conversion of the giant defense industries and their scientists and engineers into a peace-keeping system and then into new enterprises would have to be supported, but it would cost no more than it costs now; and it could be as dramatic as the surge of growth after World War II

and the injection of the Marshall plan.

For a peace-keeping system to be adopted and successful, it must be effective, modifiable, minimal, and rewarding. As with building a successful commercial enterprise, we do not need a system that punishes and postures and fantasizes but a working system that bargains and compromises, that manages and watches and responds.

Within these general guidelines, there are many alternative self-stabilizing arrangements that would be stable — just as with living systems, where there are many different kinds of self-stabilizing biological creatures that have learned how to survive. This again helps to make the initial negotiations easier, because many of the specific demands and preferences of different countries can be accommodated in a complex system as long as the crucial stability rules are not broken.

The process of analyzing possible designs and then going on to a working peace-keeping system could be done in three stages, although they might overlap.

The first stage would be the assembly of one or more technical-analysis and design groups, who would work full time for many months on general stability principles and applications and alternative proposals. Such groups might be organized under European or other auspices, or in any of several centres of advanced study. They would need to include practical politicians and diplomats and experts in law and economics and science and arms, as well as experienced negotiators and social analysts. Qualified people from both East and West should be in every such group, to avert the danger the Federalists warned against when they said, 'Men often oppose a thing, merely because they have had no agency in planning it, or because it may have been planned by those whom they dislike.' The long-run peace-keeping process, like government itself, is a political process involving informed participation by all parties, bargaining, compromise, and wary trust, and it will not work unless it has

these characteristics from the beginning.

This stage can make use of the many years of hard work and ideas that have already gone into arms-control negotiations and treaties between East and West. Questions of multinational administrative structure, of financing, of what laboratories and plants and bases are to be monitored and controlled, of access and adequate guards, of fail-safe mechanisms, and so on and on, are discussed in hundreds of documents going back to 1945. The difference here is that the analyses are directed toward creating a business organization, not a double-spy system. Some large multinational corporations might even serve as models. It could be a refreshing change. No arms discussions afterwards would be the same.

The second stage of the process of adoption will be the effort to explain to a world-wide public how such a system would work to increase everyone's security. This means making converts; and energetic political leadership will be important. Yet, the world-wide peace movement and nuclear-freeze movement today show that in these matters, millions of people are already ahead of their governments. There is now both a political and economic constituency for the world as a whole, just waiting to be tapped. Any group of leaders with a well-designed plan that offers some immediate hope to everyone could sweep the planet almost overnight.

The third stage of the process will be the actual convening of a top-level design-negotiation conference between East and West to decide on a system and adopt it and begin the steps of implementation. It would have to work out hundreds of details to meet the needs of all the participant countries as well as possible, and it would need technical advisers who have taken part in the original design-study groups, to make sure that stability requirements are not compromised. The recent Law of the Sea Conference was a remarkably successful negotiation of this kind, with agreement

worked out by a hundred nations on a hundred points over a 7-year period. At the end it was marred by the withdrawal of the U.S. after a change of administrations — which shows the danger of excessively long negotiations — but the general success and the negotiating mechanisms developed there may provide useful lessons for the nuclear peace-keeping design negotiations that lie ahead.

The whole process might go faster than anyone supposes. Things are far more complex now, but it is worth remembering that the U.S. Constitution was hammered out in four months by less than forty delegates. The stabilization-design problem is no longer a question of confrontation and counting; it focuses on fresh and larger arrangements. Lesser details might not be such sticking-points as they usually are, because there would be good adjustment mechanisms for working them out later in an on-going system. And public enthusiasm and mass pressure, along with the nuclear urgency, might make the delegates surprisingly eager to finish their task and move into the new world.

If experienced and influential representatives of the great powers agree on and endorse the main features of a peace-keeping system, they might be able to convince every country that it would be a hard-headed improvement in security. All around the world, it could give such an increased sense of plan, of security, and of hope, that people across the political spectrum would rally to it, allies would press and bargain for its adoption, and the move to a new system and the reduction of nuclear armaments might suddenly become psychologically and politically easier than anyone believed. After these turbulent rapids, if we survive, there is a boundless ocean of new potentialities opening out before us.

What is important is to get the first step started now. When people need to build a new building, they call in architects. Calling together a conference of architects who can design a safer structure for the world must be done eventually. Now is the time.

Conquering space

MAHDI ELMANDJRA

IN order to survive, mankind has always had to defend itself against the vagaries of nature and certain species of animals, while hunting other species for food. Man has therefore been conditioned from the very beginning by a defensive attitude towards nature. Despite his achievements across the millennia in mastering nature, man has always subconsciously adopted the attitude of the conqueror of his own sphere, the spheres of others and, today, the cosmos. We talk about the 'conquest' or the 'colonization' of space.¹ This creates an ethical and philosophical problem which raises the issue of the purpose of this conquest, and how it relates to man's priorities on earth.

Concepts and the value system that fashion science are in a state of great flux today. However impressive scientific discoveries and technological achievements may be, they only take on significance fully when placed in the context of this transformation. Ilya Prigogine, Nobel Prize winner for physics, links this transformation to attempts to cast off the 'Newtonian myth', and he glimpses 'a convergence' of at least three fundamental themes: 'time', 'innovative activity' and 'qualitative diversity'. These are extremely useful themes for the analysis of the problem of space, particularly if one bears in mind Prigogine's following conclusion: 'Science can no longer claim the right to deny the relevance and interest of other points of view, and least of all can it refuse to listen to the viewpoints of the human sciences, philosophy and art.'²

Those who design and finance

1 The Subject Catalog of the American Library of Congress contains 13 entries under the term 'space', including 'space colonies' and 'colonization of space'.

2 Ilya Prigogine, *La Nouvelle Alliance, Metamorphose de la Science*, in conjunction with Isabelle Stengers, p. 24, Gallimard (1979).

space research strategies have quite different concerns. The main concern so far as space programmes are concerned, is 'conquest', with all the implications of power and pre-eminence encompassing the military, political, scientific, economic and socio-cultural spheres. Let it be said at once, to avoid any misunderstandings, that this in no way belittles the spirit of creativity, the scientific rigour, the courage, the devotion, the passion and the hard work of the scientists and technicians involved, without which science, technology and our knowledge of the universe could never have made the astonishing strides ahead that they have.

It is this dualism — space as an instrument of power and destruction, and even extermination, on the one hand, and on the other, space as a factor of progress — that makes it extremely difficult to study the question. To tackle it one has to be modest and prudent, not only because of its conceptual and physical scope but also because of the ethical and deontological problems surrounding it, for the formulation of which the first attempts are only now being made. We are far from having any answers as yet, because we are still not adequately acquainted with the questions. This disarray at the level of ideas and intents does not, however, prevent the 'conquest' of space from continuing to take its course. The rationale of politics does not always go along harmoniously with science, let alone with philosophy or ethics.

I POLITICAL

The exploration of space through the imagination, the philosophical and scientific speculation about what lies beyond this earth, the internationalization of the universe in spiritual terms, and the study of the

heavenly bodies by astrologers, astronomers, mathematicians and physicists have been the constants of civilization, and are the products of man's curiosity and creativity. The genuinely operational developments that triggered off the conquest of space, however, only date back some forty years when the V2 rockets³ were built by Germany during World War II.

(a) The pre-eminence of power and military objectives

The first political consideration is that the conquest of space owes its origins to scientific research at the service of politics, for military purposes, to establish power. This is yet another constant, which is far more recent than the constants we mentioned above, and it has to be borne in mind for a current analysis of the economic, scientific and socio-cultural implications of the conquest of space.

It is therefore easy to see why one of the Allies' primary objectives when Germany was occupied was to capture the V2s and the researchers involved in their construction. This greatly contributed to Soviet and American research. On 4 October, 1957, the Soviet Union placed the *Sputnik 1* in orbit, and on 31 January, 1958, the United States became a space power when it launched *Explorer 1*.

The success of *Sputnik 1* was seen worldwide, and particularly in the United States, as a demonstration of political, scientific and military power. Less than a year later, on 1 October, 1958, one of the institutions that has greatly influenced space research developments since then came into being: NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration). The creation of NASA was the result of a political

design⁴ to stand up to another political design.⁵ The race for the conquest of space is, and will continue to be a matter for the major powers alone for several years, if not several decades to come.

There are many political considerations raised by the conquest of space: power, military superiority, intelligence (espionage), the control of the information and telecommunications sectors, cultural influence, scientific research and civilian applications in the shape of technological spin-offs. The actual notion of what is 'political' has taken on other meanings which are very different from the traditional concepts of the political field. Our intention is not to examine all these aspects because we are not competent to do so, and because we do not have access to all the data we would require; and also because far better qualified people have to deliver communications on some of these issues.

(b) The 'critical mass' — a condition for admission to the Space Club

The race for the conquest of space is momentarily inseparable from the modern arms race, which depends on the technological developments of space science. As we said earlier, this is where the power-sharing borderline lies between the major powers. The number of members of the Space Club is most unlikely to grow beyond about 15 before the end of the century, because to become a member huge scientific, technological, military and financial resources are required. In a word: a critical mass. This is one of the 'first lessons one draws from the political analysis of 'space.' There is not room in 'space' for groupings of less than 200 million inhabitants.⁶ Western Europe realized this back in the

sixties, when it created technical regional institutions for space research (ESRO) and for satellite launching (ELDO) which paved the way for the establishment of the European Space Agency in 1975, which now has 11 members.

The Space Club comprises two groups: the superpowers, which are completely independent in scientific and technological terms, and which invest between them 95 per cent of the aggregate financial and human resources spent on this sector. It has its own rules of 'fair play' dating back to 1962 when both countries signed a cooperation and information exchange agreement in several fields of space research. Other agreements followed, such as Salt 1 (1972) and Salt 2 (1979), which regulated the use of reconnaissance satellites.⁷ This cooperation has never really been affected by the ups and downs of the international situation.⁸

The second group in the Club is made up of those countries with sufficient technological and scientific capacity to implement space programmes, and which have acquired satellite launching autonomy, but whose volume of space activities is very small compared with those of the superpowers. The members of group two are western Europe, Japan, China and India. These countries have created their own launching rockets, and have placed satellites manufactured by themselves in orbit. Note that these are countries that also have their own nuclear weapons. Pakistan, Indonesia, Brazil and Argentina will be joining this group before the end of this decade. Inside the Space Club, a trip around the world becomes very rapid — six space powers, but with a total population exceeding half of the world's population.

What will happen to the others? What part will they have in this conquest of space? Will there exist

countries, respectively, after China, India, the USSR and the USA.

7. The superpowers monopolize these satellites (the Soviet Union has launched 500 and United States 250, and China is the only other country that has launched a few (5 or 6).

8. See Jean-Pierre Clerck, 'Les sentinelles de la Frontière d'en haut'. *Le Monde*, 2-4 August, 1983.

4. See John M Logsdon, 'L'Evolution de la Politique Spatiale Americaine de 1957 a 1980' in *Futuribles* N°38, November 1980.

5. See Alain Dupas, 'La politique spatiale de l'Union Sovietique et des Pays Socialistes', *ibid*.

6. Perhaps the exception here is Japan, because of its scientific and technological potential, and its economic possibilities; but even so, it is the seventh most highly populated country in the world. Two other exceptions might be Indonesia (160m) and Brazil (130m) which are the fourth and fifth most highly populated

3. The development of rockets had been recommended ever since the end of the 19th century by a Russian mathematician Konstantin Tsiolkovski, for space travel. A group of German research workers, led by Herman Oberth, carried out scientific work in the field during the Twenties, while an American physicist, Robert Goddard, was working on rockets to send scientific instruments into space. These were the wholly differing concerns that lay behind the design and construction of the V2s.

those who are 'cursed in space' as there are the 'cursed on earth'? Will they be the same ones? This is what the political debate is all about, and it concerns the whole of mankind. For the moment, it is obvious that the development of space power on one side increases the political, military, economic and socio-cultural dependence of the others, and further deepens the rift between the haves and have-nots.

(c) Information: the object, means and purpose of space activities

The conquest of space has revealed one very important political factor. Whether one is dealing with fostering research, designing new technologies, military strategy, building space weapons, reconnaissance, scientific observation telecommunications satellites, or any civil or military application, cultural influence, or political or economic interests — everything, in the space field, can be reduced to one word: information. The conquest of space is the development of the capacity to gather, process, use and update information with increasing reliability, effectiveness and speed. More than half the technological effort that goes into space projects has to do with information.

As Andre Lebeau has said: 'The satellite, whatever its mission, is primarily a link which receives information and retransmits it to one or more earth stations. The growth of information transactions is a fundamental aspect of technological and economic development. It takes concrete form in two technologies: information and telecommunications'.⁹

The political considerations can therefore be summarized as a political will at the service of power, with military power in the first place, a demographic and economic critical mass, a great scientific and technological capacity, and a real information and communication strategy.

9. 'L'Espace: Enjeu et Perspectives', in 'Enjeux de l'Espace' *Cahiers Français*, N°206-237, May-September 1982, Documentation Française.

II ECONOMIC

The economic dimension of the conquest of space may be examined from three points of view: the cost of space activities, their induced effects through civil applications and the transformations they cause to the economic structures.

(a) The cost of space activities

It is very difficult to study costs and budgets, because information available is scarce and sometimes non-existent. What does exist is not always complete, and in most cases the data on military activities are minimized or camouflaged for security reasons. One therefore has to extrapolate to gain an approximate idea, and the margin of error (more likely in default than in excess) may be considerable. But what is most important is the order of magnitude. This order of magnitude may be established on the basis of various official statistics in the United States and western Europe, but in the case of the Soviet Union, one has to consult the studies of the American Congress and the rough estimates made by researchers. We have opted for a very simple method — using the official statistics that exist, and assuming that the financial effort of the Soviet Union is around the same order of magnitude as that of the United States.

The United States space budgets give us some idea of the investment required to conquer space, and their growth reflects the tensions and competition that exists between the two superpowers. The figures of the official budgets (civilian and military) of the United States between 1959 and 1982 total over these 24 years to \$ 133, 210 million.

There is a strong boost given to the civilian budget between 1961 and 1964 after President Kennedy undertook in May 1961 to put a man on the moon before the end of the decade. This is when the 25,000m dollar *Apollo* programme was launched. It was thanks to *Apollo II* that Neil Armstrong was able to land on the moon on 20 July, 1969, and spend 21'36" there,

and tread 400 metres of the moon's surface for 2'13".

The United States' space budget, taken as a whole, remained stationary and even slipped back after 1967. Only 11 years later, in 1978, did it once again break the \$ 6,000m per annum mark. It only took another 4 years — from 1978 to 1982 — to double this figure to \$ 11,500m. The civilian and military budgets followed very different courses over this 25 year period. The civilian budget regularly fell from 1965, and only began to rise again after 1976 when the shuttle programme was inaugurated. But it was only in 1982 that the civilian budget topped the 1965 record, only because it was realized that for the first time, the official military budget had overtaken it. The steady increase in the military budget has been a constant feature of all the space budgets, whether American or otherwise.

It is, of course, a simple matter to analyse data when they are available, as in the United States budget. But it is much more difficult to study the Soviet expenditures. Since no official figures exist, one is forced to refer to a combination of indicators, such as the number of space launches carried out, the payloads launched, the new technologies developed, and the manpower resources employed in the space sector. The latter indicator is quite interesting, because it shows that the Soviet Union employs 600,000 people in the space sector, while the United States only employs 150,000. One also has to take account of the fact that the Soviet programmes are almost exclusively for military and scientific ends, without any concern for commercial aspects.

By extrapolating from these parameters, one concludes that the Soviet space expenditure must be more or less as great as that of the United States. The American budget also has to be revised, for it is estimated that the Defence Department budget is understated by at least one third.¹⁰ If allowance is made for this

10. Alain Dupas, p. 84 op. cit. estimates that 60 per cent of the United States space programme is military, and the Soviet Union's is two third military. According to

adjustment, the 1982 figures for the United States comes to \$ 15,000m, a similar figure of that of the Soviet Union, while the rest of the world spends \$ 2,000m,¹¹ making an aggregate total of 32,000m dollars. For 1984, world space expenditure should be around \$ 45,000m.

The conquest of space is a costly business. It is beyond the reach of the vast majority of the international community. Major programmes like *Apollo*, the Soviet *Salyut* station or the American shuttle programme require 8 to 10 years to develop, with investments of \$ 20,000m on average per project. The European *Spacelab* project cost \$ 1,000m, as did the development of *Ariane*. It costs \$ 75m every time the United States shuttle is launched, and 300 million French francs to launch *Ariane*. A communications satellite like *Intelsat V* will cost \$ 35m. *Arabsat* will cost over \$ 200m, of which \$ 140m is for the purchase of three satellites.

During the current year, the Soviet Union and the United States alone will spend over \$ 4 million per hour between them on space research. This makes 100 million dollars per day spent on space — 95 per cent of the total world expenditure. The level of these investments is far more than an indication of the financial resources available to the space powers; it is also a political, military and technological indicator of the innovatory capacity of their research and development structures, and the expertise of their scholars and technicians.

This cost analysis leads us to one very elementary conclusion. The conquest of space is not within the reach of everybody. It requires human capital, scientific research, technological skill, an economy of scale, financial resources and a military potential that only a tiny number of countries possess. For several decades to come the world will be divided between the conquerors of space and the consumers of the spin-offs of this conquest. There will be space

landlords and space tenants. Space cannot be bought with money. Several countries have to buy satellites and rent launchers to place them into orbit. 'Turnkey' space projects is not a solution. Investment in human resources and endogenous scientific research, coupled with a sub-regional and regional cooperation policy able to reach a critical mass, are the only viable formulae in time and in space.

(b) Induced effects and rate of return

The economic study of space activities is a very new phenomenon. Originally, space was conquered for strategic reasons only, and therefore no one thought in terms of its economic rate of return, or its commercial implications. The commercial performance of communication and observation satellites has opened up a new perspective. This has been strengthened by the American space shuttle which, being retrievable, can be re-used a hundred times over, cutting down space waste,¹² and will open up the path to the industrialization of space. Thoughts are already turning to the amortization of space investment and the development of commercial strategies.

According to Andre Lebeau and Karl Egon Reuter: 'Today, attempts are no longer being made to give a new boost to a movement for economic applications, now that it draws its dynamism from other sources; economic objectives form the main motive force behind the space effort.'¹³

Although economic objectives have become the motive force, the strategic and military objective is still the heart and soul of at least two thirds of all space activities.

Despite the great lags (7 to 15 years) between the moment space technologies are discovered and the moment they are 'declassified' for civil use, economics has made its debut in space, and its role will

continue to grow. One of the indicators of the economic magnitude of space activities is the breakdown of civil satellites by function. At present, the situation is as follows:

Communication	60%
Earth observation	30%
Scientific experiments	10%

The preponderance of communication satellites is one of the reasons why we consider information as a political datum of the conquest of space before considering it from the economic point of view.¹⁴ One of the first commercial space ventures was in 1962, when the United States A.T.T. corporation financed the first communication satellite, *Telstar 1*, for the intercontinental transmission of television broadcasts. The satellite belonged to the privately owned corporation, but the government paid for the launch.

All the economic analyses, studies and projections agree on one thing. Information is already the main source of income from space use and will remain so for the next 30 to 40 years. The annual turnover of the information industry today is \$150,000 million, and by the year 2000, it will account for 40 per cent of the value added of the world industry. A study conducted in the United States on the estimated incomes from the industrialization of space put the figure at \$10,000 million by 1990, \$40,000 million by 2000 and \$150,000 million by 2010. Information should be the sole source of these revenues up to 1995, and will still represent 50 per cent by 2010, when the supply of solar energy and materials manufacture would account for 35 per cent and 10 per cent, respectively, of the total revenues.¹⁵

Communication satellites already earn between \$2,000 million and

14. See Mahdi Elmandjra, 'Information et Souverainete', Académie du Royaume du Maroc, March 1983.

15. Study conducted by Science Applications Inc. for NASA, and quoted by Jesco Von Puttmaker in 'The Industrialization Transcending the Limits to Growth', *The Futurist*, June 1979, p. 93 (the figures have been adjusted to the 1984 value of the dollar).

Dupas, 'the Soviets are currently devoting more than the Americans to their space activities' (p. 87).

11. Western Europe (\$ 1,000m), Japan (\$ 500m), China and India (\$ 500m, estimated).

12. After the *Apollo* programme, the material left behind on the moon by the Americans (modules, jeeps, etc.) was reckoned to be worth just under \$ 1,000 million.

13. 'Le Role de l'Espace dans le Développement Economique', *Futuribles*, N 38, November 1980.

\$3,000 million per year. Over 120 communication satellites have been placed in orbit over the past 10 years: three quarters of them are still operational. People are already talking about 'crowding', and the International Telecommunication Union considers 'radio frequencies and geostationary orbits to be limited natural resources.'¹⁶ *Arianespace* expects a turnover of 1,600 million francs in 1984, and its order book is full. Space has become big business. Soon, it will be the centre of major industrial developments, and a considerable source of energy for the earth.

Jesco Von Puttmaker, the head of NASA's space industrialization programme and long term planning, has explained the objectives of industrialization in the following terms: 'The long term objective of space industrialization is the expansion — and hence the survival — of mankind. There are three shorter term objectives: (i) to supply space-derived services for which agencies, industries and the public are willing to pay; (ii) to supply space-derived products which can be sold at a profit, and (iii) to supply space energy.'¹⁷

By 1990, more than 200 more satellites will be put into orbit. Unless the Soviet Union leases the services of its launchers, only the United States, Europe and Japan (after 1988 when the H_4 rocket will become operational) will be able to meet the market demand. The privatization of the space sector which began with *Telstar 1*, is continuing in the United States and Europe, but it is still in its early days. The *Arianespace* company, which comprises the 'Centre National des Etudes Spatiales Français',¹⁸ European aerospace companies and 13 leading European banks, has become 'since 1983 the only private concern in the world with such responsibilities for large rockets. For although private companies are commissioned to manufacture

the rockets, in the United States in particular, they do not yet have the ability to launch them.'¹⁸ Space has helped to create 7,500 jobs in France (about 2,000 million francs).

In the United States, the private sector is preparing to thrust its way into the marketing of space services and products. In March 1983, President Reagan asked the Department of Commerce, which is responsible for managing and operating American meteorological and earth observation satellites, to examine the possibility of selling them. Eighteen companies came forward to buy them. The project is still under study.¹⁹

Last year a meeting was held in New York at which 17 of the leading companies working in the space sector were represented. The purpose of the conference was 'to make a concrete investigation of commercial ventures rather than outline the research and development which presently abounds on this topic.'²⁰ In September 1983, the American firm, Fairchild Space and Electronics Co, concluded an agreement with *Nasa* to put *Leascraft* into service in 1987. This will be the first recoverable space platform to be managed commercially. It will be put into orbit by the shuttle. *Nasa* has already indicated that it is willing to absorb some of the costs of industrial space ventures by offering free launching facilities for satellites, if the projects are commercially viable.

One thing that is noticeable about the United States and western Europe is that public space expenditure is encouraging the development of advanced technology in the private sector, and is preparing the way for private enterprise to take an active part in the commercial exploitation of these technologies. Civil applications from the spin-offs of space research are still few and far between, but important spin-offs have already been gained in other

sectors of the economy (automobile industry, shipping, transport, telephone, television, food, medicine, informatics, robotics, telematics, fisheries, oil industry, urban management, etc...).

The combined effects of the information revolution and the developments of space research will have the greatest effect on the way society is going to develop. These will be qualitative changes, produced by scientific creativity and technological innovation. These changes will gradually (too gradually) affect mental structures, and find fertile terrain in the military sector in a tiny number of countries; and then they will have repercussions on the structures and activities of the major multinational corporations which have a great capacity for adaptation. They have already begun to change the economic and industrial structures, and world trading practices.

Space has been marketed on stock exchanges for twenty years.²¹ Yet the number of industrial firms which manage to break into this sector is very small. Generally they are firms that work regularly with the defence and army authorities (the linkage between space and military activities is standard practice). There are reckoned to be about 20 companies in the United States and about a dozen in Europe at the very most.

Western Europe's space industry is grouped into three consortia.²² Once again, we find the 'critical mass' principle which applies equally to privately-owned firms as it does to countries.

Civil applications of space technologies are going to hasten the transformation of economic structures, especially after the end of this decade. The list of the applications grows longer every day. It is far too long to reproduce in this paper. It ranges from telecommunications and meteorology to agriculture and

16. See Thomas O' Toole, 'A glut of communications satellites' *Herald Tribune*, 26 January 1984.

17. 'The Industrialization Transcending the Limits to Growth' in *The Futurist*, p. 93, June 1979.

18. Pierre Langereaux, '25 ans de fusées dans le monde' in *Les Enjeux de l'Espace*, op. cit.

19. See *New York Times*, 28 August, 1983.

20. 'Industry enters the space age', p. 4, *Futurific*, 11 November 1983.

21. COMSAT (Communication Satellite Corporation) was created in the United States in 1964 with government support, and since 1970 it has regularly paid dividends to its shareholders.

22. COSMOS, MESH and STAR. See Gerard Desseigne, 'Espace et Industrie', *Futuribles*, November 1980, p. 89.

cartography, remote sensing of natural resources and medical research, the manufacture of products and materials in space, radiology and energy transmission. The economic rate of return on space activity investments is virtually taken for granted today. This can be seen in telecommunications, better weather forecasts, the quality and selling price of space images (a space image is equivalent to about 4,000 aerial photographs).

The European *Spacelab* scientific laboratory costs about 1,000 million dollars. Its performance during the December 1983 flight was remarkable; if the data on the 72 scientific experiments it transmitted back to earth were lined up, character by character, they would link the earth to the moon! Quite enough to keep research workers busy for a few years to come. Developments of this kind lead to structural changes in scientific research which then rebound on the economic and socio-cultural structures. *Spacelab* is therefore going to become big business, because governments and privately-owned companies will be able to hire their services at the rate of around \$ 7,000 for each kilogram of payload transported.²³

Space has become profitable for those who control it; if it were not, they would not be sending up one satellite each month on average to stay in a geostationary orbit 36,000 kms from earth. The pharmaceutical industry would not be investing millions of dollars in separation by electrophoresis for the manufacture of thirty or more products in orbiting factories with an annual turnover that should reach \$ 30,000 million by the year 2000.²⁴ This figure gives us an inkling of the economic changes that are already taking place, and those to come; in about fifteen years, the annual turnover of just one industry, the pharmaceutical industry, will draw level with the aggregate world expenditure on space in 1982!

²³. This figure (\$ 3,000 per pound) is set out in the NASA agreement; See *Time Magazine*, p. 49, 28 November, 1983.

²⁴. The manufacture of products like antibiotics, insulin, etc., is 700 times more effective under weightless conditions than on earth. See Albert Ducrog, 'Les médicaments venus de l'espace', in *Science et Avenir*, N°439, September 1983.

III SOCIO-CULTURAL

The profitability of space is not just economic; it is also political,²⁵ because of the prestige with which the general public views any achievement connected with space. But is it in any way profitable in socio-cultural terms? This would be more difficult to prove. The conquest of space does not take account of its social relevance; it is little concerned with the quality of life and is hardly interested at all in the effects of this conquest on value systems.

(a) The absence of socio-cultural innovation

There is an enormous gap, a gulf, a 'black hole', between the weight accorded to military and economic considerations in space policies, and that accorded to the socio-cultural sphere. This is a reflection of the inability of the societies concerned to adapt to the socio-cultural changes that are taking place, and even less to guide them according to a scale of values, of ethical parameters and a set of goals for the enhancement of people's well-being and self-fulfilment, and to create the conditions required for peace.

This gap is being continually widened, because mankind as a whole has not yet proved itself capable of implementing the same degree of socio-cultural innovation that has been introduced in the scientific and technological fields.²⁶ Psychology teaches us that the extension of space reduces conflicts in a group. The extension of our space, thanks to scientific progress, seems to be doing the opposite, and increasing conflicts. Satellites make it necessary to build anti-satellites, and these require anti-anti-satellites... Geostationary orbits are ideal for communication satellites, but they are

²⁵. The latest illustration of this is the importance attached to space in President Reagan's 'State of the Union' address on 25 January, 1984, in which he said that the objective of the United States is to develop 'a new frontier'—the frontier of space, with the installation of an orbiting city by the beginning of the next decade. The effect of this statement has been compared to that which followed President Kennedy's address in 1961 on the American moon landing.

²⁶. See Mahdi Elmandjra 'Technological Innovation: Its Impact on Human Values', Tokyo 1983.

already the object of major battles.

Despite all the progress that has been made thanks to the conquest of space, it is hard to deny the increased short-sightedness that is being shown with regard to man's future. People look far into the future when drawing up space programmes or when they have to identify objects revolving in space,²⁷ but they do not look any further than the end of their nose where the socio-cultural implications of these developments are concerned. We do not possess any scientific data to enable us to establish how current technological developments will affect our way of life and value systems 15 or 20 years from now. Fortunately, we have our artistic and literary creativity, science fiction and films about the future to bridge this inexcusable gap in part.

There are a great many, high quality philosophical and sociological studies of time. It would be valuable to draw on these when studying the socio-cultural consequences of the conquest of space, taking account of the strong link that exists between temporal schema and cultural systems, because, as Jean Ladrière has said: 'The temporal schema necessarily influences the whole cultural system, by destroying the consistencies on which the latter has been established. In this sense, project-linked temporality, as it works in scientific research and technological enterprises, contributes to the destructuring of traditional cultural systems, which are based on other forms of temporality.'²⁸

By upsetting our notions of space, the conquest of space is contributing to the destruction of the temporal concepts that underlie our value systems.

The problems of space law, for example, which we will not be discussing here, are only incidentally legal problems. The main reason that they exist is that there are no norms in this new sphere, and the

²⁷. The United States *Norad* (North American Air Defence Command) observatory can identify an object the size of a tennis ball 30,000 kms away.

²⁸. 'Les Enjeux de la Rationalité', Aubier 1977.

issues that are raised relate to socio-cultural value systems much more than to bases of law or jurisprudence.

The conquest of space is both the source and the product of technological innovation. All innovation involves breaks. We are aware of the scientific, strategic and even economic ruptures caused by this innovation, but we are not so well acquainted with the way in which socio-cultural ruptures are caused, and the direction in which value systems develop. Research into these issues is virtually non-existent. The reason is very simple and should be expressed as clearly as possible. Man has never been a priority in space programmes and activities. Man's place in space is in the technological spinoffs—what can be culled from the consumer and the robot of space, but he is still far from becoming the subject.

These are the facts that have to be borne in mind, particularly when considering the great scientific and technological achievements of the conquest of space; they must be viewed realistically, and not through the rose-coloured spectacles of the media which encourages for various reasons boundless wonder and amazement. One thing is certain: on the earth there are a great many elementary problems that are placing the life and survival of man at stake, and many of them could already have been settled if the same attention had been devoted to them as has been devoted to outer space.

(b) The Third World: 'satellization', but into which orbit?

Where does the Third World stand so far as the conquest of space is concerned? We have already referred to this question in political terms, but it is even more acute in socio-cultural terms. Most of the Third World countries are very late in catching up with scientific and technological developments, more because of a lack of socio-cultural policy and a neglect of value systems rather than because of a shortage of financial resources. Scientific creativity and technological innovation cannot take place in a vacuum or in the files containing 'co-operation'

agreements ready for signature; they need endogenous development models that match their value systems and which have social relevance.

Outside China, India and three or four other countries, the Third World is not in the running for the conquest of space, and yet it is the Third World that is going to suffer the greatest socio-cultural consequences so far as information, the transmission of televised programmes and other applications are concerned. In the space field, the Third World has been 'launched', yet it is not the master of its own orbit. Its 'orbital self determination' depends on its mastery of its own value systems, the exploitation of scientific research and regional cooperation which will enable it to reach that critical mass it needs to avoid falling back even further.

One of the most acute ethical problems that arise in North-South relations in the space field is not so much the fact that tens of billions of dollars are being poured into the galaxies instead of being spent on helping to eradicate famine, disease, ignorance and poverty on earth. Charity has never been able to settle this kind of problem. The Third World has become — for a variety of reasons — a major buyer of weapons from the industrial countries. These purchases will not help the Third World in the least to develop scientific or technological research, as is the case for the countries that sell these weapons. On the contrary, the Third World is indirectly financing a considerable share of the developed countries' scientific research effort. This involuntary participation can be put at over one quarter of the total cost of the programmes being implemented by the space powers. This is something that may seem untenable at first sight, but it is comparatively easy to explain why it is true.

Between 1973 and 1982, the Third World spent 78,300 million dollars on weapons. Three quarters (74.8 per cent) of these weapons were bought from the six space powers, totalling 50,000 million dollars (at 1975 prices) in ten years. That makes a total expenditure of \$ 6,000 million

per year on an average. The annual average expenditure on space research in the United States over, for example, the same ten years was about \$ 6,800 million. Third World arms purchases are worth at least 50 per cent of the aggregate world expenditure on space activities. When one recalls the close strategic, economic and financial link between the arms industry and the space industry, one might well feel that the estimated 25 per cent mentioned above is realistic enough. It is not necessary to go any further in this demonstration to understand the ethical problems that this raises in North-South and South-South relations.

The final point that we will mention in this socio-cultural section, concerns a phenomenon that is likely to grow considerably in the future. I am referring to the arrogance which the conquest of space seems to be instilling into the conquerors. This brings us back to the concern expressed at the beginning, when we discussed the concept of 'conquest'. It is a problem that ranges beyond the socio-cultural and ethical fields, because our attitude to the creation of the universe and the humility with which we perceive it — particularly after having managed to unveil some of its mysteries — belongs to the realm of metaphysics of faith. And here lies one of the keys to the most difficult conquest of all — the conquest of interior space — namely, man himself.

There can be no conclusion to a study of this kind. It is already something if it manages to raise one or two major issues and to stimulate discussion. One question remains: why conquer space? For what purpose? How can it guarantee the dignity of man, his self fulfilment, and how can it ensure peace on earth and peace in space? This is where the crux of the debate lies, not in the technological achievements that may either be placed at the service of these objectives, or be relegated among the vast range of instruments that exist for the extermination of mankind. Technology has nothing to do with the real issues; what is at issue is man, whether he is the one who dominates, or whether he passively accept this domination.

A global salvage operation

ROMESH THAPAR

IT is no longer necessary for us to declare that our problems are global or to spend much time explaining the global 'problematique'. The dimensions of the crisis are visible for all to see. But, I am afraid that our thinking which once led the analysis on the challenges facing us, is now marking time, stressing the obvious, but unable to open the doors to alternative initiatives and actions.

We seem reluctant to accept a simple fact. The structures of thought and implementation, whether in the imaginary area of concepts and creativity or within the more rigid

and defined disciplines of scientific and technical application, must of necessity undergo major transformation when attempting to overcome persistent crises and failures. In other words, if we are agreed, as I believe we are, that our world can no longer progress along the accepted pathways, then we have to evolve new and very different frameworks for tackling what we call the global 'problematique'.

I am making no original point. This is the repeated lesson of history. When confused and in disarray, step out of the frame in which you operate and seek a new frame. The act

of stepping out demands a reassessment and re-interpretation of those accepted concepts and perspectives which willy nilly come to be treated as immutable. These are vital transitions based on the belief that a careful re-ordering of priorities can make for profound transformations. Stated differently, qualitative change is possible without the disruption of revolutionary action.

Naturally, a broad consensus has to be fashioned on the experience of the past, the exhaustion of the present and the potentialities of an alternative future. Only such a consensus can clear the way to building the minimum infrastructures for a qualitatively varied effort, an effort which in its developing sweep should impact relationships within nations and between nations. In the Club of Rome's activity, we have been attempting these related tasks.

The situation is now ready for new interventions. I would like on this occasion to dwell on one aspect of our global existence which demands urgent attention — the growth of global productivity at a moment of stagnation, and particularly in those regions which are backward, deprived and poverty-stricken.

For several decades we have been trying to put together the more equal systems of regional cooperation which were destroyed or made impotent during the colonial and imperial eras and led to the concentration of power and wealth in the western world. Experience has taught us rather pointedly that no real progress can be registered in restoring the regional or global economic balance unless we are prepared to abandon a whole array of inter-connected techniques of 'aiding-cum-trading', 'resource transferring' and what is known as 'industrial-technological collaboration'.

These have been seen as subtle stratagems to preserve an unequal *status quo* and have generated suspicion, contempt and resistance from those they were presumably designed to serve. Even the notion in the former colonial world that 'a debt was being repaid' no longer holds. That is why we are now witnessing a

serious fracturing of the existing frameworks for economic collaboration.

This is not to suggest that these economic relationships do not have a role to play. They do, but in a more globally integral and healthier framework, insulated from the manipulations of powerful multi-national corporations operating from western bases. An 'instant' transformation cannot be devised for the old tarnished systems. A new international economic order has to be put together step by step with a strict adherence to tests that serve the perspectives of that order. Where do we begin?

I believe that we must view the global problematique as made up of a number of regional problematiques. It is here where the North's economic disruption of the South is the greatest — and the economic distortion, too, by the more powerful in each region of the South. These tangles and tendencies are striking at the roots of self-reliant national growth — individual and collective self-reliance. In the past, each civilisation arranged its way of life within these economic contours. There is really no other way to a sense of security and well-being.

We have to produce the blueprint of a workable and just international economic order to dissolve our fears, upsets, dislocations and paralyses. We must in the context of this effort face the truths which we tend to shove aside, distort and blot out; we must project the need for injecting greater self-reliance into the regions as part of the texturing of a global economic balance. This economic self-reliance would reject the vulgar notion that there is only one way to what we call development and 'modernisation'.

A vast area is opening up of experimentation in developmental models, in the texturing of societies and living styles, and in the evolving of value systems which help us learn from each other, particularly the West from the East and the North from the South because for too long the traffic of ideas and concepts has been the other way around. There is much fumbling and mean-

dering, double-talking and double-thinking, in this experimentation. Our fatuous optimism is a cloak for a debilitating *status quo*.

Naturally, if we are serious about a global salvage operation, we have to concern ourselves with those regions which embrace the poor of the world. It is here that the seed of a new future should see a flowering, a flowering which could influence profoundly the global problematique.

If regional cooperation is to pave the way to a new international economic order, as I have tried to suggest it must see a qualitative and dramatic change by what could be described as *massive catalytic inputs* into the regions, inputs which are not narrow money-making ventures by international financiers, but strictly non-profit investments in projects and infrastructures that catalyse and rejuvenate the self-reliance of vast areas and spark or build the productive potential of millions of people. In my part of the world — Southern Asia — I can see the enormous potentialities of such catalytic actions which are not linked to the profit perspectives of trans-national corporations but represent an effort to nurture global productivity, economic health and social growth.

The opening of the vast acreages of the southern American continent, underpopulated and overgrown with forests, the linking of the rivers of the Indian sub-continent to harness life-giving waters otherwise lost to the oceans, the creation of solar energy grids from the Arab lands where the sun shines the year round and reduces the soil to sand, for the cheap desalination of brackish water and the reclaiming of our planet's deserts, the scientific afforestation and intensive farming of the best agricultural lands of the southern hemisphere, the activation of old dreams like the passage way through the Isthmus of Kra, or highways across continents for moving the commerce of the future and, last but not least, the careful linking of the potentials of various hemispheres for vital industrial and technological advance, are only a few of the jobs to be done by a world community

that is persuaded to live globally, in peace and cooperation.

It is becoming very clear to those who are able to co-relate the results of a variety of research that the present fiddling with our global and national problems will only spawn more problems. This is now happening in what might be called command economies and also in those which are compelled to trail behind in the Third World. We keep hoping for miracles, but are able only to prevent a breakdown. A fundamental structural change in concepts and implementation would better serve global interests even though adjustments would be difficult for some. It is here that catalytic investments for wider productivity would open new pathways to the future.

Ideas of this dimension have begun to circulate in various forms, but within the old exploitative framework. We have to pull them out and place them in a new relevance. In a sense, the future is on our side — for, the infrastructures we set up to cope with these catalytic tasks will provide us the base for the awesome exploitation of the resources of the oceans, and of space itself, that is if we intend using these resources intelligently to balance global growth. Actually, for futurists there is no evading this issue of a qualitative change in tackling global development. To continue in our old grooves is to invite increasing tension, destruction and exhaustion.

Where do we find the wherewithal for this effort? We already possess it — in the massively wasteful military budgets with which we have saddled ourselves, now running close to 1000 billion dollars annually, or one trillion. The funding for the kind of catalytic programmes I have referred to cannot be organised without a determined international campaign to divert to such an effort a part — yes, only a part! — of the astronomical expenditure now set aside for kill and over-kill capacities. It is here that the Club of Rome has to mobilise and coordinate the expertise that is available to it — men, ideas, computers, informatics, movements and governments which distil the political will of peoples. There could be no better memorial

than this to the founder of the Club of Rome, Aurelio Peccei.

The greening of the northern hemisphere took place, in part, during the colonial and imperial era, but it was largely based on cheap oil. Qualitative transformations in the living standards of people have been sparked by developments of this order. Today, it is not possible to organise the energy and materials for the final attack on poverty, and all that it represents, without a catalytic exercise. Such an exercise is within the scientific/technical/resource capacity of our planet. It demands the kind of priorities that are denied by the existing military-industrial complex and the obsessions around profit margins which further aggravate the global problem, making the rich richer and the poor poorer. Soon, it will not be possible to manage these aberrations. We have to act before it is too late.

Enough of drawing the usual statistical tables about how many schools could live on the cost of a single bomber aircraft or submarine or tank, and the millions who could be housed, transported and employed creatively with the budgets reserved for military confrontations, real and unreal. We have known the truth, but we have not acted. Perhaps, we fear for our security. Maybe, we are hooked on the employment provided by the armaments industry and the arms bazaar. Or, unknown to us, we educate ourselves to create within us the hates upon which wars are nourished. It is these scenarios of our madness that have to change through a change in perspectives, global perspectives.

If our labours have any meaning for the future, we have to sketch the alternatives in terms of a global salvage operation. The catalytic investments I have elaborated, fed by a parallel effort to cut down military expenditures, could reduce the tensions which gather around us and help foster a new climate of peace. No one talks about such investments in the future. They are dismissed as idealistic ventures by the practical profit-maximisers of this century who have brought us to our chaotic present. We have to break their hold on our minds. Can we do it?

Books

RENEWABLE ENERGY: The Power to Choose by Daniel Deudney and Christopher Flavin. A World-watch Institute book. W.W. Norton, 1983.

SINCE the oil shock of 1973, greater attention has been focused on renewable sources of energy. With spiralling oil bills and the increasing costs of nuclear power — both economic and environmental — renewable energy has attained a new status. 'The decade since the 1973 oil embargo has been marked by extraordinary progress in harnessing the inexhaustible flow of energy that comes from the sun, the wind, the water, living plants, and the earth itself' according to Deudney and Flavin in *Renewable Energy: the power to choose*.

Each one of these sources are examined by the authors, their pros and cons stated, and an assessment made in the overall context of the existing socio-political realities and in the context of the total energy scene.

The progress made on the energy scene has resulted largely from the *conservation* of energy. In this context the authors point to the expertise known to older civilizations for centuries: using natural conditions to the best advantage. These 'passive' solar designs were part of the early Greek, Roman, Chinese and Indian sensibility. However, according to the authors, with the onset of the industrial revolution and the urban migration that accompanied it, many traditional architectural forms were abandoned. This has proved costly and only recently has solar design begun to influence architecture. According to the authors, 'Energy will rank with the elevator and the masonry arch as having a major influence on architecture.'

The foundations of the solar technology used today, were laid in the 18th century. The availability of cheap coal-fired equipment halted their widespread use and only the '73 oil price spiral resulted in a renewed boom in solar energy. Israel has made the most progress and according to the authors 'some 60 per cent of Israel's households have solar heated

water — enough to reduce national electricity consumption by 6 per cent.' The rural communities of the Third World have the most to gain from this technology in such applications as heating water, drying crops, cooking and pumping water.

The photovoltaic revolution is still around the corner — its cost being the main impediment. So far, electricity from this technology is ten times the cost of power from conventional sources. But, as Deudney and Flavin point out, their potential to provide inexpensive, independent power to people and industries throughout the world is far more important than their gross energy contribution.

Wood remains the most widely used renewable energy source. However, population growth has led to the conversion of forests into farms and increasing livestock herds have degraded the remaining woodlands. The Indian sub-continent is an example of these twin processes. This can only be rectified by massive replanting and by improving management.

The authors point to the success of 'community forestry' in China and S. Korea but only partial success in India. However, in their diagnosis of the problem, they do not see that this is due to the mechanism adopted. The government forest departments have been entrusted with this task. As has been their practice, people have no place in their scheme. In fact, by taking over roadside and canal plantation, their operations are depriving the poor of a major source of fuel-wood. Community forestry has been derailed and the increased plantations are for commercial use.

Deudney and Flavin see increased wood use in the future: by 50 per cent in industrial countries and by one-third in developing countries by the year 2000 — in all a 40 per cent increase. Wood, crop residues, and dung are important energy sources particularly in the rural sector. About half the energy for rural households in India comes from crop residues and cow-dung. Increasingly, gobar gas plants are providing gas for cooking, lighting and electrical generation and at the same time producing excellent fertilizer.

However, as the authors point out, India's gobar gas plants are expensive and oriented towards household rather than village use.

Falling water provides one-quarter of the world's electricity, making it the second largest renewable energy source after wood. The authors are sensitive to the hazards of large dams — ecologically and in terms of the threat to the poor, particularly the tribals. They suggest grassroot involvement both in planning and in sharing the benefits. They make out a good case for small scale hydro development and recommend institutional (World Bank) rethinking by broadening loan criteria and in recognising 'the hidden social costs of large dams and the neglected benefits of small ones.' A doubling of worldwide hydropower output by the turn of the century is predicted.

Wind pumps stand as a prime example of what E.F. Schumacher called an 'intermediate technology'. They are excellent for lifting water and can be used where wind speeds average as low as eight miles per hour. Wind turbines are generating electricity for rural households and even electric utilities are supplementing their supplies from 'wind farmers'. California is the leader in this technology.

The authors, however, fail to perceive the misuse of the natural resource base in countries like India. We have denuded most of our forests, degraded our soils and damaged our water resources. Almost 50 per cent of Indian industrial output is from biomass based industries. And for this resource they compete with the rural populations who depend on it for their daily existence.

What emerges from the research of the authors is a widely diversified energy sources scenario. Each nation has its own needs and will work towards meeting these through availability of resources along with evolving technologies. Most nations will rely on a mix of the various renewable energy sources which together will form the basis for a sustainable society.

About one-quarter of global energy use goes to heat, cool and light buildings—most of it from fuels that are better used in industry, automobiles and petrochemical production. Building more efficiently and with sensitivity to the environment can reduce energy needs very substantially. Coupled with renewable energy technologies such as solar collectors, photovoltaic panels on rooftops and wind turbines on the ground could make individuals somewhat independent of the big utilities. Institutional and financial barriers are the main stumbling blocs to such a transformation.

The higher costs of renewable energy today deflects industry from its use. The accent has been on increased efficiencies. Fuel savings have been effected without reducing productivity. The authors feel that this trend will continue. Renewable energy is most suited to agriculture and rural communities particularly in the developing world. Though the overall

energy used in this sector is small, there seems to be no quick solution and renewable sources such as wood and other bio-energy sources are in short supply. It is here that man's ingenuity and determination will be tested. For, it involves massive mobilization of money and manpower along with better/more efficient fuel use (better *choolas*).

Community forestry will have to be given a new orientation, involving the people, to whom the benefits must accrue. A new breed of village workers must bridge the gap between caste and class. Only then can success be achieved whether in community forestry or large village size biogas digesters. Technologies must be simple, inexpensive and easy to operate. Only small, decentralized systems can provide the electricity needs of the village. Renewable energy is most advantageous where the needs are minimal. The authors make no bones that such systems have been most successful in countries with a strong centralised system: China.

'Institutions and politics — not resource constraints or technological maturity — impede greater use of renewable energy', Deudney and Flavin argue. Nuclear power has received huge subsidies. It remains costly, dangerous and the problems of waste disposal are yet to be solved. A combination of R & D programmes with adequate subsidies and incentives can transform the renewable energy scene. 'The transition has begun', according to the authors, 'and in the last decade improved energy efficiency has exceeded the contribution of all new sources of supply combined...'

Indian planners would be well advised to heed some of the arguments advanced by Deudney and Flavin. We seem to be on the brink of a massive expansion of nuclear power in spite of the dismal failure of the existing plants. And an inordinate number of large dams are listed for implementation. A new institutional arrangement is required for the greening of India. Otherwise 'development' will only deprive the people.

Tejbir Singh

JOBS FOR TOMORROW: The Potential for Substituting Manpower for Energy by Stabel and Reday-Mulvey. Vantage Press, 1981.

THIS book has been based on a report that the authors prepared for the Commission for European Communities in 1977; which probably resulted from the increasing prices in the world market for energy, especially with reference to oil. This was the time when world economists and sociologists were greatly worried over the structural changes that their economies might have to face following the rapid increase in energy prices, and thus were groping for alternatives that might tend to restore the equilibrium.

The authors here have not explored new ground—no radically different theories regarding the produc-

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tion structure are proposed. Indeed, their proposals (at least in the Indian context) seem to be rather simplistic, in that the substitution of expensive energy for the (relatively) cheaper manpower seems to be inevitable if one follows the strict dictates of the Marshallian equilibrium, and adverse movement in relative prices would imply a process of substitution among the various factors of production.

The basic position outlined here is that manpower can be substituted for energy in different ways which would include (a) reversing the historical trend of the machine for manpower substitution in the sectors where this mechanization has increased the number of professionally unattractive jobs or caused job disqualification; (b) introducing recycling loops for energy-expensive base materials which today are not recycled, and (c) restructuring the industrial production system through the introduction of new reconditioning loops in the life-cycles of industrial materials or products, which would imply that the life cycles of industrial products will replace traditional linear production-use-disposal patterns. The book however concentrates mainly on the reconditioning process as the method which offers the greatest potential for the creation of new and satisfying jobs and a substantial reduction in energy consumption.

An examination of the French automobile and construction industry leads the authors to conclude that most of the approaches offering a potential for substituting manpower for energy are faced with a number of institutional barriers, mainly of a vocational, educational, industrial and consumer behaviour nature. The authors recognise that these barriers can be overcome either by changes in the ethos of education or by legislation, or by the development of a new industrial strategy — and at the global level, it is only the latter that can have a lasting impact on the process of substitution of energy by labour.

It is proposed that a new industrial strategy could consist of a slow shifting of production activities in selected branches (from manufacturing to a corresponding sector like leasing) to an option that would include both hard and soft technologies. A new industrial strategy could be built along these ideas by either industry or government. The basic advantage of lesser waste and lower energy consumption could be the guidelines for evaluation of projects from a societal point of view.

It is interesting to note that nothing in the book departs from the fundamental precincts of Marshallian economics. It is true that none of the classical economists ever recognised energy as a distinct factor of production, and so it never entered in their formulation of the production function—even now it is not necessary to give a separate identity to energy as a factor of production. If energy is treated as an output resulting from the inputs of labour and capital, then the question is one of substitution between labour on one hand and a combination of labour and capital. At the margin the choice

will narrow down to a choice between technologies entailing labour intensive and capital intensive technologies — which is nothing but a restatement of the Robinson-Sen formulation of 'Choice of Technology'.

Nevertheless, it is not the choice criterion that matters in the ultimate analysis, but the process by which this choice is to be implemented, and it is here that the authors score in their 'fabian' approach to the change in the industrial system. There is universal recognition that a system that is so volatile to price changes in the energy input is an unstable system and has to be changed, but the process of change has come under debate. The authors take the soft options of a gradual change involving a process of reconditioning, which, considering the complex industrial system that we are dealing with, has a certain amount of intuitive appeal.

The need for an attempt to 'recondition' industrial psychology and philosophy about the technology options that are available to it, cannot be denied, that too in a world where energy prices do tend to be sticky upwards, and the authors do a good job of putting their philosophy across. However, as pointed out earlier, no new theory is proposed — the wine remains the same despite the changed bottle — but the wine is nevertheless heady!

P. Chatterjee

THE SEVENTH YEAR: Industrial Civilization in Transition by W. Jackson Davis. W.W. Norton and Co., New York, 1979.

THE Seventh Year was published in 1979 when Jimmy Carter was in his last year as President of the U.S.A. The tone of the book reflects the introspective nature of the then President and the nation he governed unlike the brash hemanship of Reagan and the U.S. of today. Davis favours a very cautious approach to the use of natural resources and uses as his theme the Biblical parable in which a young Pharaoh, Amenhotep, dreamt that seven sleek and healthy cows emerged from the waters of the Nile river to feed upon its banks. Within moments they were each devoured by seven starved and haggard cows that followed. The dream was interpreted by Joseph as a prophecy of God foretelling seven years of plenty to be followed by seven years of famine throughout the lands of Egypt. Davis is convinced that we are now in the 'seventh year' of plenty.

This book is about the most readable summary of ecological and environmental concerns of the West that I have come across. It is also a hangover of the rude shock the Americans had when the Arabs started charging somewhat realistic prices for oil. I wonder if Davis still feels the same way, because most Americans don't: it is cheaper to run a car in the U.S. today than in 1965. Carter and his controls on pollution and environmental concerns are also gone and replaced by pro-industry legislation.

Davis' warning that the time of plenty is nearly past is not believed by many people any more. But Davis believes that 'industrial civilization stands at the threshold of a period of accelerated cultural evolution that will culminate in a new and profoundly different civilization from the one we now know.'

He tries to prove this by examining the links among energy, resources and economy and then furnishes a foundation for developing the consequences of energy and resource depletion for the future. 'It seems certain that by the year 2000 the steady stream of secondary natural resources that has sustained industrialism in the past will have begun an irreversible decline, resulting in steadily escalating prices, and since '...capital is not infinite in supply: rather, the money cycle is driven by the conversion of energy' we are bound to have a capital shortage. This will in turn fan inflation and food may be 7.5 times more expensive in the year 2000.

Davis thinks that it is this tremendous increase in the price of food that will make life difficult for the people in the U.S. as these changes will be accompanied by high escalation in prices of manufactured goods and capital costs of tractors and other machines may become prohibitive. This, according to him, might make human and animal labour more attractive and natural manures would be more economical than chemical fertilizers. Davis believes all this and quite convincingly shows why we should be against monoculture, the green revolution, chemical pesticides, and deforestation. He does all this with the help of excellent graphs, bar charts, statistics, and clear prose.

I have no problem with Davis' motives and concerns. However, I do have nitpicking questions and doubts. Davis argues that our 'seventh year' may end before 2000. But Cesare Marchetti writing in the *New Scientist* of 2nd May gives us a little more time. He calculates that oil may not run out before 2080 but natural gas will become dominant much before that. He doesn't see solar energy becoming very important before 2025. Marchetti predicts the recession continuing upto 2000 and an upswing after that.

The two forecasts paint very different scenarios for our lifetimes but I think the essence remains the same: sharing of resources is going to be even more difficult in the future. I am dumbfounded by our planners', scientists' and politicians' casual approach to the future as being more of the same. However, Davis is clear: 'optimism for the future cannot be based on the hope for a continuance of things past.'

The information contained in *The Seventh Year* is a bare minimum for all planners and those concerned with our future. I wish there was something *desi* of the same quality. Our needs are a little more desperate. We can't reduce our consumption. If everyone in our nation possessed just one pair of shoes, three or four sets of good clothes, lived in a

small comfortable house, had a fan and radio, enough water to drink and bathe and every child a book to read and an exercise book to write on, we would put enormous pressure on our resources. Enough to frighten Davis. That is why we need our own Davis'. To look into the future and dream an impossible dream.

Davis exhorts us to 'bid the past farewell without regret and to open our hearts and minds to the new' because the future will demand belt tightening. In India this message would apply to a very small minority. For the others there has to be hope for a little more. There must be something more for us before the lean-cow years begin.

Dinesh Mohan

BEYOND THE NORTH-SOUTH STALEMATE

by Roger D. Hansen. Mc Graw Hill Book Co., New York, 1979.

ROGER D. HANSEN'S study of the North-South conflict is specifically oriented towards identifying the direction of change in this relationship and suggesting policy prescriptions that go beyond 'traditional statecraft' to managing, within a moderate international system, the problem in the eighties. It is therefore perhaps fitting to look afresh at this book in 1985, six years after it was first published as part of the 1980s project of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Nowhere has Hansen's analysis proved more sadly disappointing than in the normative importance he gives for the eighties to the basic human needs/human rights perspective on the North-South problem. This is both in relation to the definition of the problem of international inequity and the Northern policy prescriptions for managing the problem. Political leaders in the South have generally viewed this perspective as a Trojan horse undermining the thrust of the South's frontal challenge to the system of interstate inequity by focusing on intrastate inequity. Northern leaders with some Southern support, Hansen says, have insisted on linking the international equity issue with domestic equity and the abolishing of absolute poverty.

He quotes the Carter administration as specifically directing aid to those countries that are developing a viable standard for meeting basic human needs and protection of human rights. Calling for developed countries' cooperation in developing proposals for a basic human needs approach to inform the North-South dialogue, the then US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance said: 'What we miss is the joint recognition by developed and developing countries that the North-South dialogue is about human beings and that equality of opportunity for a fuller life makes sense for people not just States.'

Hansen recognises that traditional security concerns could make even a Carter compromise on these

issues. In his profile for the eighties, he mentions such variables as East-West tension and a downturn in the economies of the OECD countries, but on the basis of his assessment of western elite cultural values and the shift away from security and power concerns to welfare considerations, Hansen is confident that the basic human needs approach would continue to be an integral component of the global equity dialogue between the North and the South.

Overinfluenced by the Carter rhetoric, Hansen writes that the eighties decade 'will most likely be one in which issues of human rights in both their economic and political/civil forms become a legitimate subject for international observation and discussion if not for certain forms of diplomatic intervention.'

It is beyond the scope of this review to identify the salient features of the eighties. It will suffice to say that within months of the publication of the book, the forces of 'right' America asserted themselves. Against the background of a second cold war, a highly security conscious America escalated defence spending, slashed welfare expenditure and raised interest rates. On the international front, it cut development assistance to IDA, adopted trade restrictive policies, and channelled bilateral aid flows to those countries in which it had a security interest irrespective of their human rights record. The forces which were behind Reaganomics were to equally assert themselves in the World Bank, which under McNamara had been at the fore of the absolute poverty campaign, but under Clausen the commitment is little more than verbal.

Notwithstanding such weaknesses in the book, its enduring contribution lies in its understanding of the reasons behind the North-South stalemate. Hansen writes,

'The present North-South relationship is polarised and stalemated because of a historical relationship that has left so much psychological scar tissue, because of the changing structure and processes of global politics, because these changes have encouraged a period of probing for weaknesses and for advantage on the part of both combatants and because neither Northern nor Southern States have yet come to the realisation that a continuation of such behaviour is not congruent with the nature of the new system or with the challenging global agenda problems that the system must learn to manage.'

He rejects the simplified projection of the North-South conflict as the resistance by 'status quo' powers to the growing demands of 'revisionist' States. Traditional statecraft, he stresses, cannot account for the behaviour of States in the present period of transition. It is a period that is marked by the diminishing role of force in North-South relations, the constraints on their behaviour owing to growing welfare-State demands, the rapid growth in

Southern organisational capability and Southern use of international organisations and of linkage strategies to achieve goals in bloc diplomatic conflicts. Apart from a few upper tier South States, power in its traditional sense has not become more diffused, the gap between the North and the South remains wider than ever, the difference lies in the increasing costs in terms of weakened domestic legitimacy to exercise control.

At the centre of the tensions flowing from the North South interaction is the refusal of States to recognise the need to sufficiently alter their goals and methods and to bring them in line with the changing international system. Hansen holds out little hope for this and accepts that the more predictable response to the North South conflict will be the 'Graduation scenario' that will integrate the upper tier of South countries into the existing international economic/political system. A new hierarchy of States will be sought to be created with the rest of the South presumably quarantined.

Such a policy prescription was in tune with the 'regional influentials' thesis of both Kissinger and Brzezinski. The identity of these States may have changed since Hansen assessed the situation, but the logic holds true for the eighties. It would effectively weaken the bargaining power of the South by co-opting the strongest, and give those countries who are capable of affecting the security of the North a stake in system maintenance.

Hansen favours the global reform approach integrated with the basic human needs approach as a solution to the present stalemate. He is sceptical of many of the positions articulated on the New International Economic Order by the South and does not see them in the long run as beneficial to a security/welfare maximising international system. For example, in the UN law of the sea conference, he says that suspicion of the North resulted in the developing countries eroding the idea of the sea as the common heritage of mankind and favouring regimes that gave individual States greater control of the sea.

Hansen at the very outset admits that the book may seem Northern because of its somewhat unsympathetic handling of some major Southern policy positions and the reviewer is forced to agree with him. His understanding of the Northern point of view does however afford us some valuable insights into one dimension of the problem. It is perhaps not just accidental that the only Southern economist/developmentalist who is quoted by Hansen is Mahbub ul Haq, formerly with the World Bank and now Planning Minister of Pakistan. It is after all within the framework of a moderate international system that Hansen wants the North South conflict to be managed for he recognises that it is a relationship that will for decades remain conflictual.

However, if we are to go beyond the stalemate, political leaders have to recognise that the rules that

have governed the behaviour of States in the international milieu for centuries can no longer be followed except at a very high cost to all parties. Global agenda problems like population stabilisation, environment, food system and nuclear proliferation have to be tackled by multilateral diplomacy, not with the North and South working at cross purposes.

Rita Manchanda

ORGANISING FOR SCIENCE: The Making of an Industrial Research Laboratory by Shiv Visvanathan. Oxford University Press, 1984.

'WHY is it that with all the money we are pouring into science today — 350-400 crores recurring, why is it that science in India has failed, when in the years of colonialism it was such a vital force? That is what we must try to understand' (p 2).

But has it? Few of the official votaries of science in our country would accept the statement quoted above. The fact that these are the words of Atma Ram, himself an ex Director-General of the CSIR, would probably be explained away as mere pique, as unwarranted criticism by one no longer in power. We would be told of the remarkable success stories of our Atomic Energy Commission, the Department of Space, the ONGC, and if these are considered too sophisticated, examples of BHEL or BEL, etc., would be quoted.

The world of official science is not only proud and complacent of its achievements, but it would in fact go on to characterize its detractors as anti-national — as people wanting to pull down the 'remarkable' institutional structures of R & D: the various Councils, the labs etc. — that India has been able to create possibly in the teeth of heavy opposition. This inward looking and complacent streak is due not only to the vested interest that a large and institutionalised bureaucracy generates, but as much because of a lack of clarity about the relations between science, technology and society. It is towards exploring the latter questions that Shiv Visvanathan's book is directed. Being one of the early attempts in the sociology of science, it naturally excites attention. Let us now turn to the core argument in the book.

This study is an attempt to understand the problems of scientists in an industrial research laboratory (IRL) in Delhi. It is written with the basic belief that the world of scientists in an industrial research laboratory can be treated as a microcosm of the problems of science and technology in a developing society. Thus, for Visvanathan, the bigger problems have to be reflected in a more limited study; a sociology of science in India has to be a study of under-development.

Visvanathan attempts to understand his world — that of scientists and their debates and predicaments in the National Physical Laboratories (NPL) histori-

cally. He argues that the debates on industrial research were about the very directions that Indian society was to take, and that the decision to set up a chain of industrial research laboratories was part of a bigger choice — a conscious commitment to heavy industrialization.

The first group of scientists in the country, those around the 'Science and Culture' group in Calcutta, understood that both science and industrialization in the 20th century faced two imperatives: first the necessity of planning and, secondly, the need for a scienticised technology. We know that the practical uses of science should be conceived as the result of chance interactions between fundamental discoveries on the one hand and practical interests on the other, which can occur in an infinite variety of ways. The purpose of policy is to increase the frequency of these interactions, and the purpose of organisation is to create a properly enclosed space so that these interactions can fructify.

How did we go about putting these general ideas into practice?

Visvanathan argues that implicit in our entire investment on science and industrial research was the belief that this investment would lead to technological prosperity. This native notion of a positive and direct relationship between investment in science and economic growth failed to take into account that there was nothing given or inherent in this relationship, but was rather a state determined by entrepreneurial activity. We must realise that the relationship is mediated by a range of disjunctions.

To understand these disjunctions, Shiv Visvanathan goes back to the early days of the establishment of the Asiatic Society. This phase was marked by the activities of amateur scientists, mainly European, basically interested in learning about India. The emphasis was on botany, geology and zoology.

It is in the second phase that we see the professionalization of science, and its consequent Indianization. The development of science in India began as a part of the wider nationalist effort and revival, but even here there was no attempt to link science with technology. The emphasis was on the primacy of pure science, and we had the establishment of the University College of Science in Calcutta.

Only in the third phase, after World War I, where both in England and Germany, the needs of war necessitated the gearing up of the world of science, that the Indian Industrial Commission saw the need for a scienticized technology. It is in Chapters 2 and 3 of the book that we can read the fascinating debates that were conducted on this relationship. While everyone agreed that technology bred not only on technology but also required formal science, there were questions raised both about the end choices of products and society, which required a particular type of technology, in turn posing the problems for the scientific community.

For instance, Malviya and others argued whether our notion of '*swadeshi*' was only to recreate an industrialized West. What would happen to our rich tradition of handicrafts and artisan products? Would not planning for an industrialized western society render millions jobless and, more importantly, rob India of its distinctive contribution to the world? The contributions of a Coomaraswamy or a Gandhi to a debate initiated by a Saha, a Bose, or a Nehru, i.e., a discourse between socially concerned scientists, planners, politicians and philosophers is what marked those early days — in a sense setting the terms for what was to follow later.

This was not all. The scientists were equally concerned about what would happen to science itself in this process of planned industrialization. Was science only to be seen in end use terms — a product of a derivative logic dictated to by exigencies of the market or planning? Was this necessarily the best choice to take?

The debate between science and technology, pure and applied science, between research and development, is still an unresolved one, because we now know that it is not only the nature of science which undergoes a profound transformation as a result of the larger forces, but that the transformed nature of science restricts the degree of choice that we have in planning about society. The debate on the nuclear options is a classic case in point. The initial exigencies of war helped create the technology of atomic weapons, thereby changing the nature and priorities of research. And once the research establishment grows, it feeds upon itself, creating in turn a situation that if today we want to de-escalate or opt out of the nuclear weapon race, we feel we cannot.

But, coming back to the Indian debate, all through the early phases, the scientists of the science and culture group argued for the primacy of pure science, looked with contempt towards the demands of industry, saw applied science as an imposition — a threat to the intellectual integrity of science. It was only two decades later, with the establishment of the CSIR, that there was a serious effort to bridge the gap between pure and applied science, between research and development, and between development and production.

How did the university based scientists, who headed and still continue to head, the various industrial research labs learn to bridge the gap, and at what cost, and with what success is the subject matter of the later chapters. What does emerge clearly is that we have still not outgrown the questions posed during the 30s and 40s — the birthmarks still dominate us.

What kind of an animal is the Industrial Research Laboratory? Is it a half-way house between an university and the industry? The university lab is sociologically clear, with defined hierarchies, and a clear end product — a good paper. The industry

too is well defined — gauged in terms of efficiency and profit.

The IRL in India went through many phases. Earlier its dominant world was that of pure science with disastrous implications for the technologists and junior staff which worked there. Later, after the Blackett Report, the attempt was to dichotomize the laboratory — return pure science to the university while transforming the development-cum-production organisations into independent manufacturing units.

Later, the IRL, went through the definition of a 'mission oriented laboratory' working to serve the long term interests of the industry. Here the IRL was seen as a proper passage between the university and the factory — a set of structures that would increase the probability of a scientific idea being converted into a technological product. This is the phase in which we are currently placed — a realisation that the scientification of technology is coupled with the industrialization of science, a product of two cultures in a new organisational mix.

This broad realisation still does not solve the problem characteristic of our IRL's — we have the individual scientists, often performing brilliantly, but unable to manufacture technology, so that the institution fails in its essential purpose.

The industrialisation of science, creating its new factory in the IRL, generates a new set of problems. One prominent one is that of unionism in the laboratory. Equally important is the issue of social accountability. The former vitiates the internal atmosphere so that we cannot even decide who is a researcher and scientist. The focus shifts to pay and perks rather than the output; to issues like who is more important — the technocrat or the generalist administrator etc.

Now, if this fluid organisational mix is to be tested against its performance within the innovation chain, the movement from invention, to prototype testing, to actual production, the results are not too difficult to predict. And with the IRL not being immune from external political decisions, viz., the decision to import a technology or a process from a multinational, is it surprising that most of the professionals in the IRL are a dispirited lot.

Shiv Visvanathan gives a number of examples of the existing cultural biases that exist in the IRL, as also of how political decisions set back years of hard and dedicated research. The organisational innovation of setting up a National Research and Development Council (NRDC) to mediate in the process of patenting, technology import and licensing, seems to have done little to lessen the basic contradictions.

It is here that I have a few difficulties with Shiv Visvanathan's thesis. If we go back to the original problem as formulated by Atma Ram — that of understanding the success/failure of science in Indian

development, and accept the author's methodological premise that the IRL cannot be understood in isolation, then the focus of the book tells us only half of the story. It is true that the world of an IRL is a relatively new one, and that we hardly understand it. Thus, defining roles, goals, or processes has not been easy.

What is missing, or rather not given enough importance to in the book, is the overall impact of our political culture in near-destroying our IRLs. Why is it that no clear goals were set up for our labs? After all, in Europe, Japan, or the USSR the success of such labs has not been insignificant. Is the relatively poor record in India due to the fact that the labs have become like government departments where only the security of tenure and individual and collective self-aggrandisement is all that matters? Or is it because we have not been able to define a S & T policy, such that pressures of multi-nationals end up subverting national research efforts? After all, we have enough examples in the field of medicine and agriculture where totally inappropriate products and technologies were foisted upon our R & D structure. And what is the role of the key individuals and decision makers in all this? With our politicians and scientists constantly vying for attention in the outside world for recognition and rewards, is it surprising that we get subverted so easily.

After all, if during the struggle for national independence, we could have scientists, technologists and planners striving together for national good, struggling to create a nationalist S & T structure, what happened after the early euphoria of independence died down? Or is it also partly an issue of culture? With science now having become a big and organised business, it requires a faceless but competent performance of thousands of individuals effectively to meet a national goal. How likely is this in a scientific culture governed neither by love of truth or of serving the national interest, where publicity and falsehood reign rampant, is a moot point. We are still, fortunately or otherwise, not an industrial culture, and attuning ourselves to the demands of a scienticized world is hardly easy. An easy going, low investment, low return, nature-dependent agricultural world cannot easily comprehend the stakes in high science with its high rewards and risks.

With his primary concentration on the internal world of organised science, Shiv Visvanathan has given us fascinating insights into the changing nature of science. With his deep historical view, we can trace many of our current ills to the manner within which we formulated our initial problematique. But, the story cannot end there. One hopes that in his later works on this problem, Dr. Visvanathan will explore some of the wider questions that have been raised, so that the study of a lab actually becomes the study of Indian underdevelopment.

Harsh Sethi

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Western Economists and Eastern Societies

GEORGE ROSEN

In this book Dr George Rosen discusses the experience of one major western intellectual group, the economists, in advising the governments of India and Pakistan from 1950 to 1970. He examines why various American institutions became involved in such an effort, why economists were interested in serving as advisors, what western economists had to offer the two governments, and why the governments were interested in inviting economists. The study attempts to look at the stated and unstated assumptions and goals of such programmes. The material for it is derived from the records of the organizations involved (the Ford Foundation, the India Project of the MIT Center for International Studies, etc) and from many interviews with economists who worked in the two countries.

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Resources, Values and Development

AMARTYA SEN

This selection of Sen's essays includes recognized classics, such as 'Peasants and Dualism', alongside new work presenting fresh ideas and analysis. The first set of essays explores the basic features of resource allocation in 'non-wage' systems, such as peasant agriculture, dual economies, and cooperative allocation. The discussion then turns to investment planning, including saving rates, discounting, and project appraisal. The next group of essays deals with shadow pricing and employment policy, paying particular attention to political and social constraints as well as economic and technological ones. The last four essays present an original view of the relationship between goods and well-being.

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Wives of the God-King

The Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri

FRÉDÉRIQUE APFFEL MARGLIN

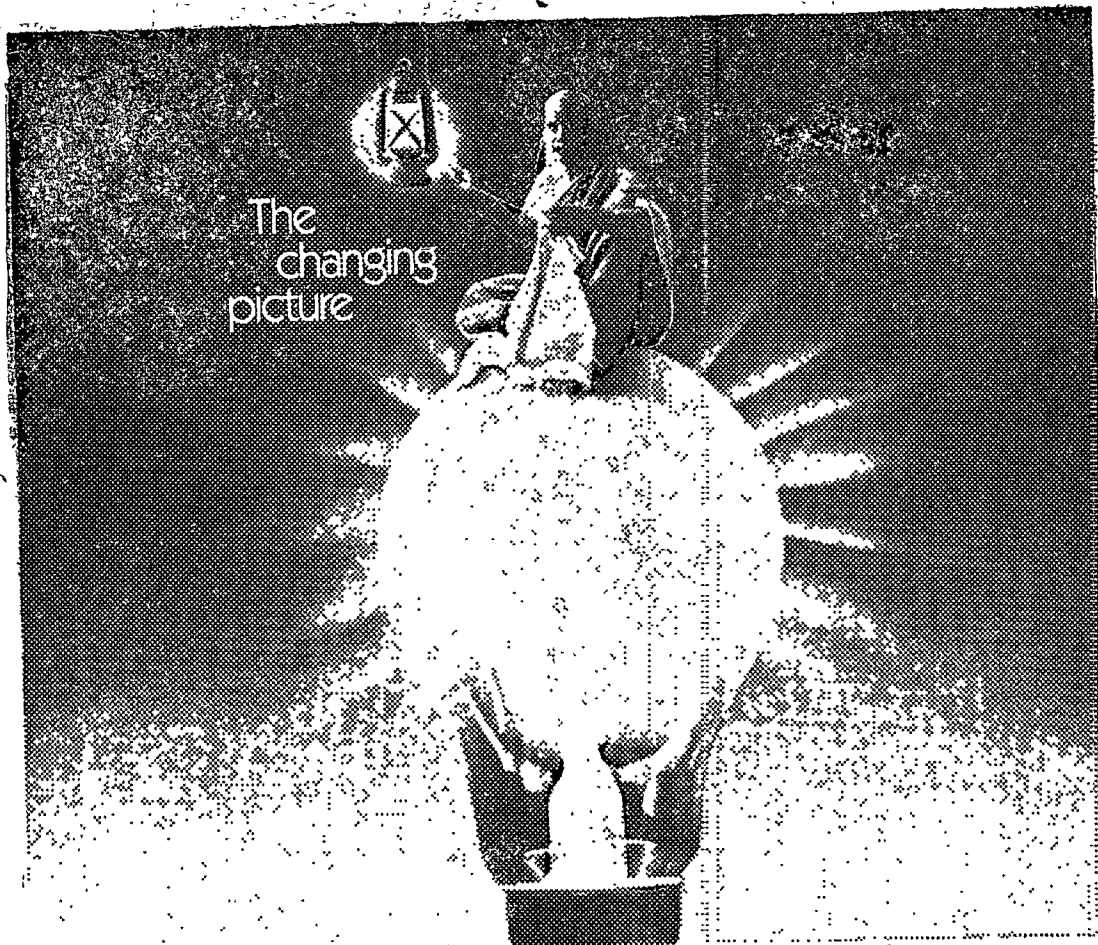
The temple and cult of Jagannātha at Puri in Orissa represents one of the most important constituents of Hindu religion and culture. Close to 1500 people perform ritual duties at this temple. All of whom are males except for a small group of women known as devadasis (literally: female servants of the deity) or temple dancers. Within the altered social conditions of modern India their position has changed rapidly, and this study recaptures its past significance. Dr Marglin's work reveals a whole new axis of value in Hindu culture corresponding to the concepts of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. These values do not speak of hierarchy or order but of a dynamic life force. This life power, she argues, is non-hierarchical, female, and crucial to understanding the royal function. The book illuminates not only the meaning of the institution of the devadasis but also throws new light on Hindu women, kinship and kingship, as well as certain aspects of Bhakti and Tantra.

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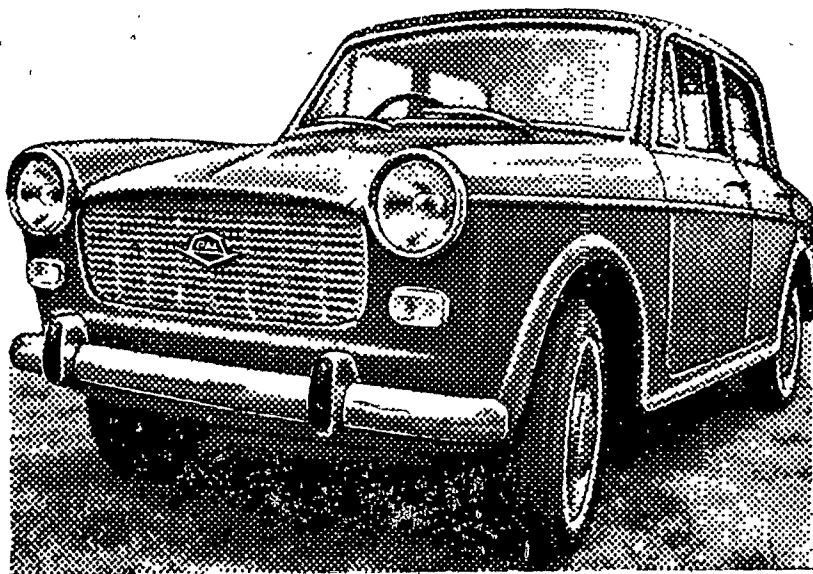


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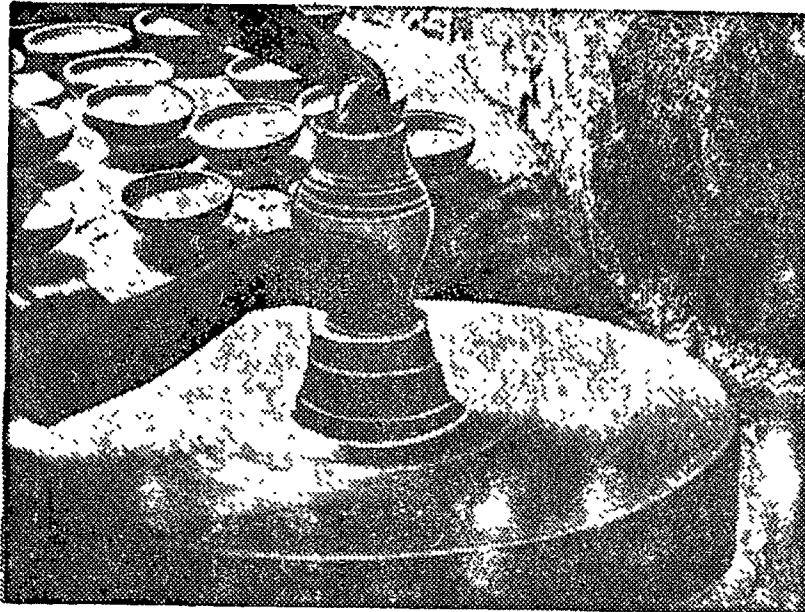
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MEDITATION

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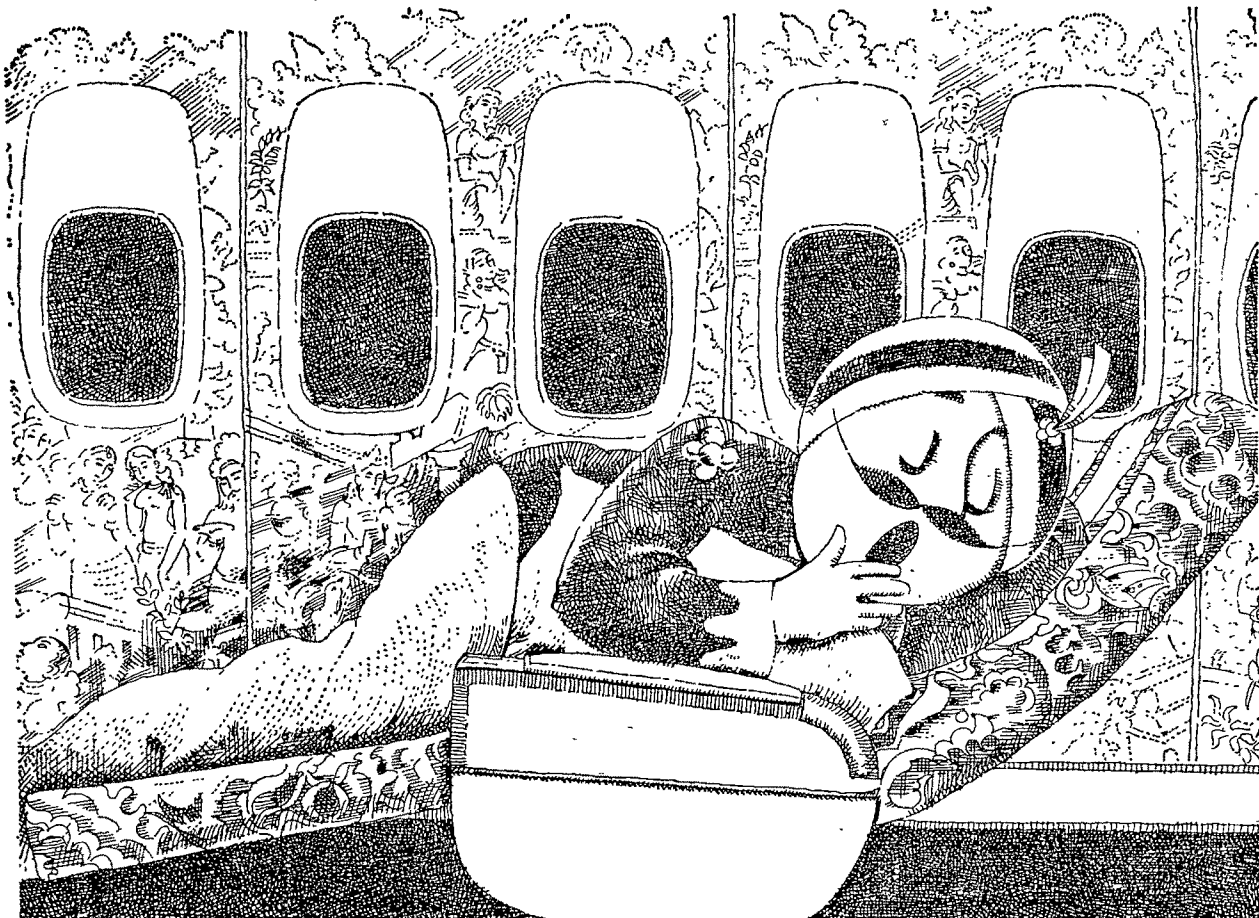
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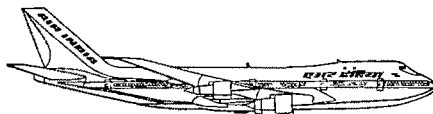
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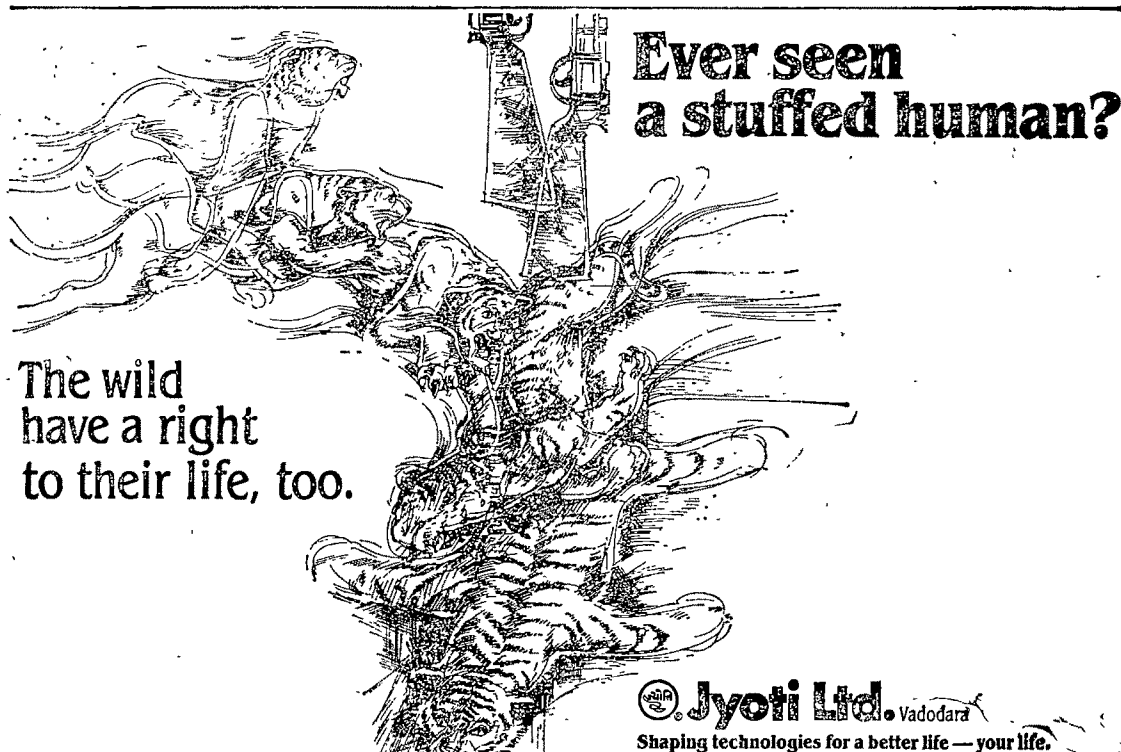
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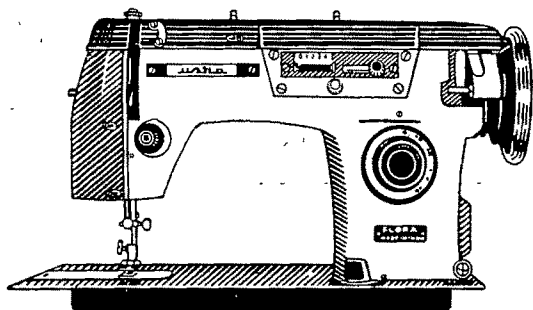
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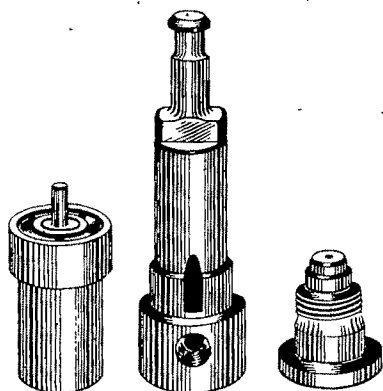
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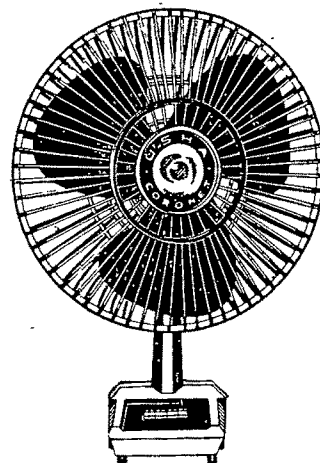
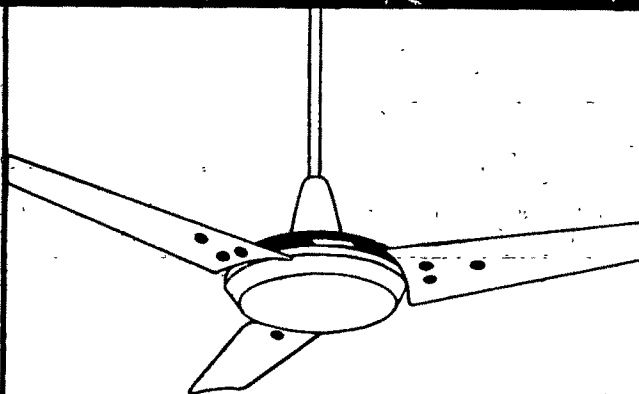
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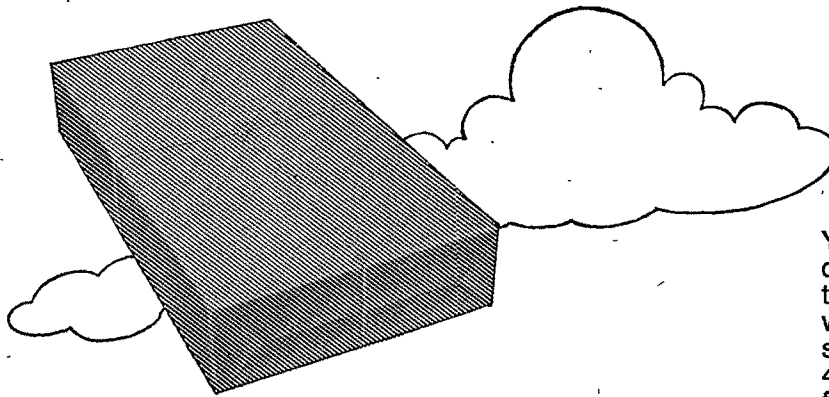
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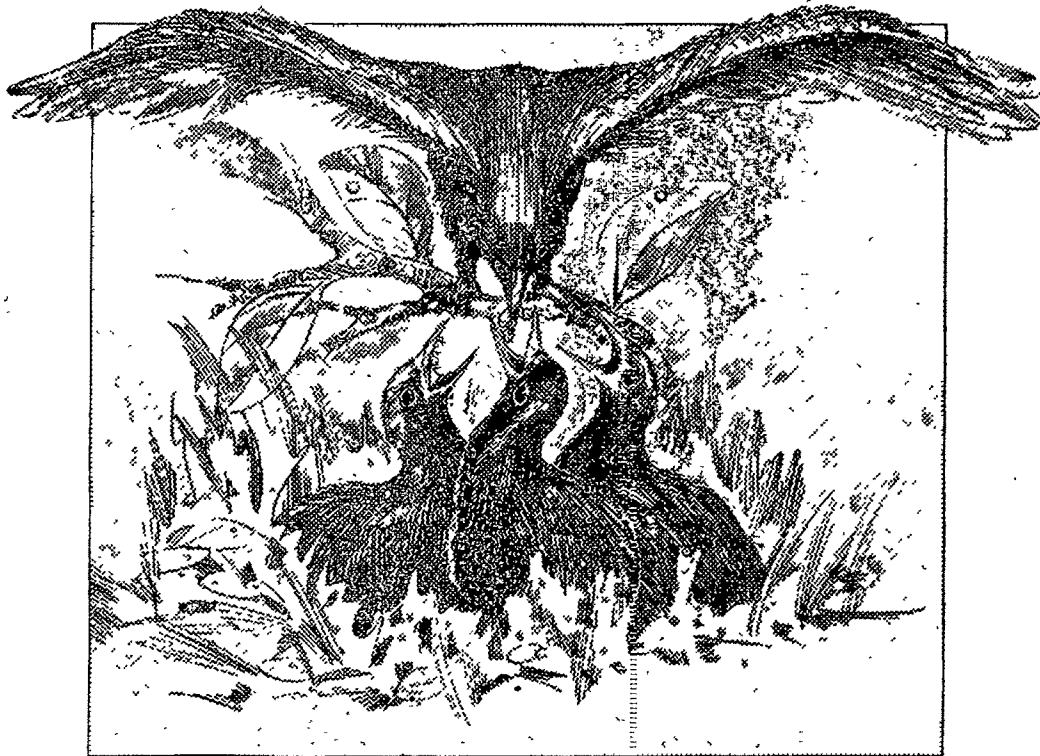
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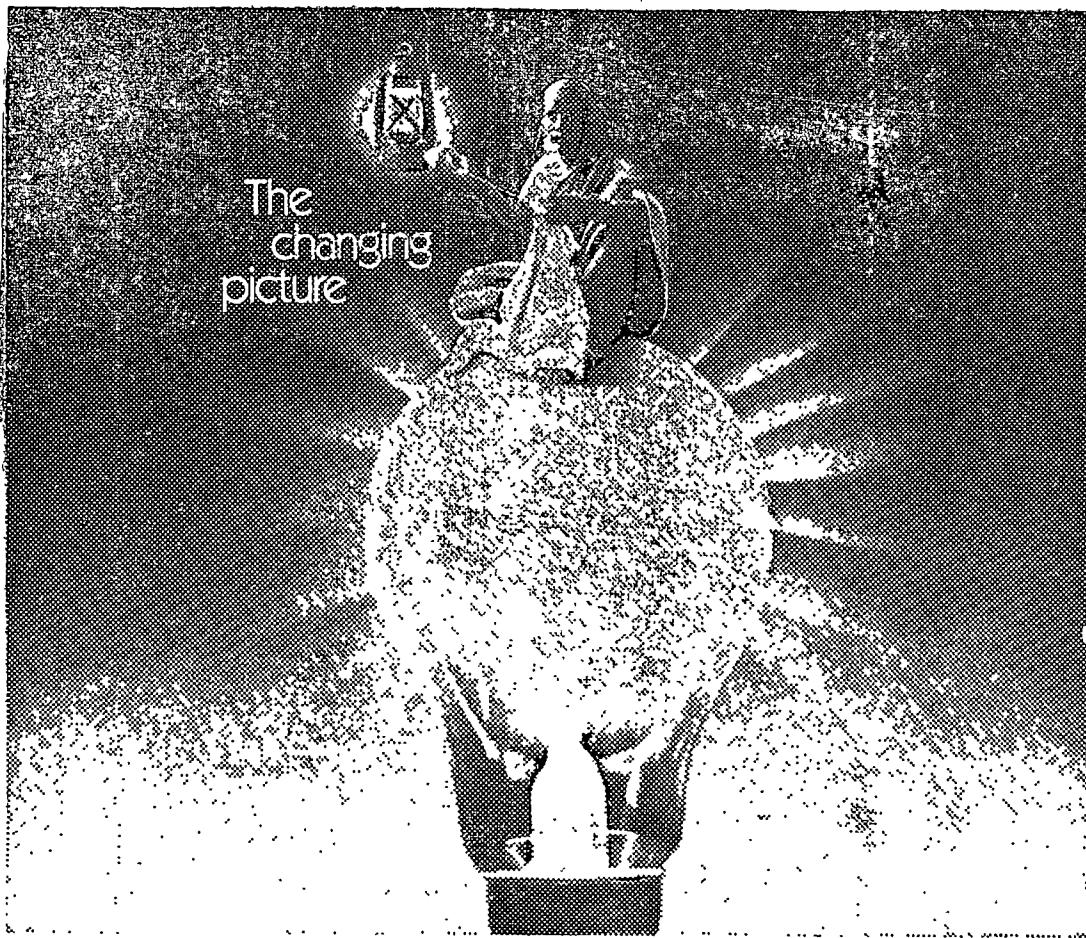
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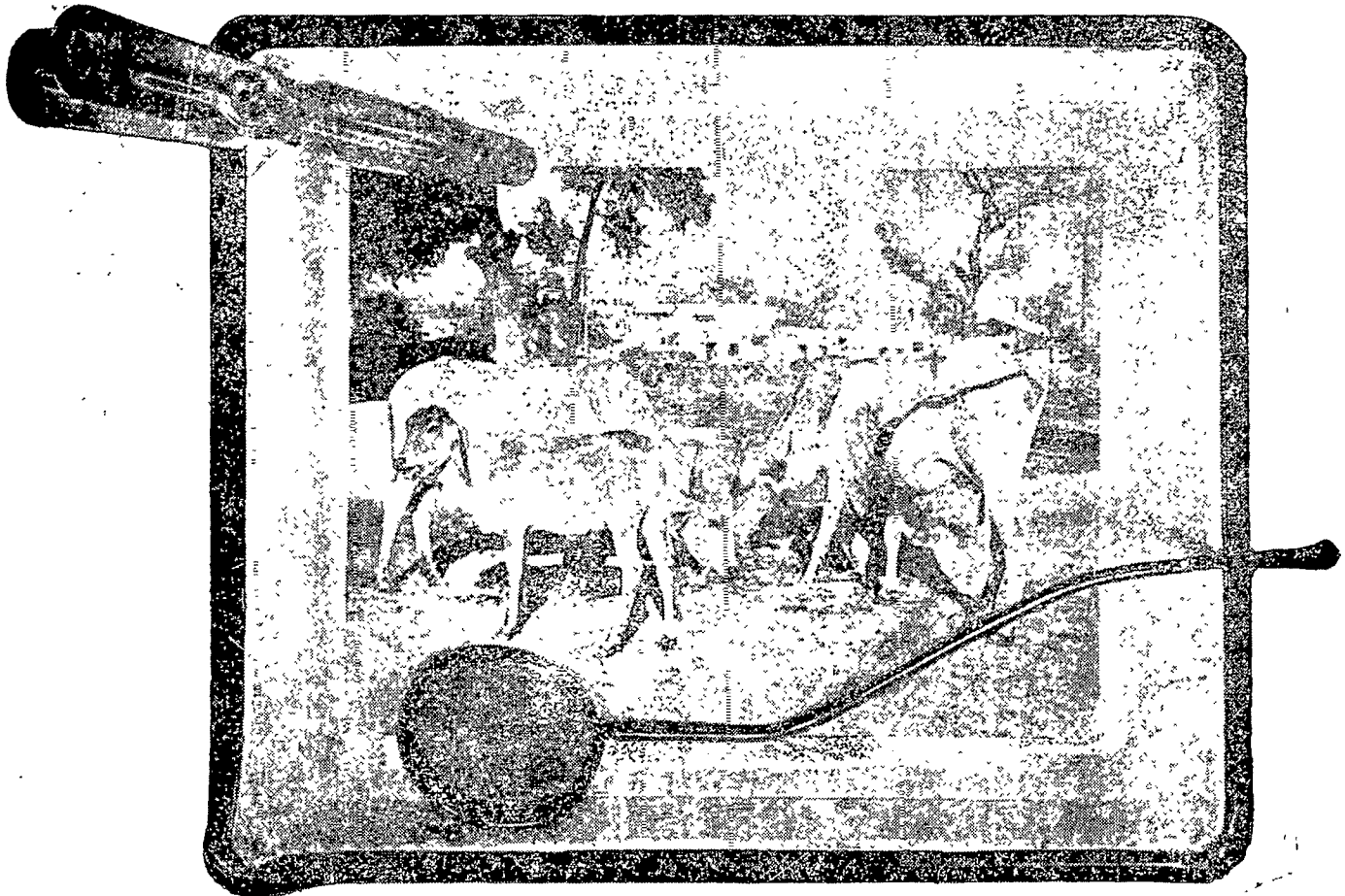
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EXT MONTH: ARCHITECTURAL POLLUTION

311

MEDITATION

a symposium on
one of the paths to
greater self-realisation

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A short statement
of the issues involved

LIBERATING THE CONSCIOUSNESS

Sisir Kumar Ghose, Professor Emeritus,
Vishwabharati, Santiniketan

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Brijesh Khindaria, journalist representing
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Indian Institute of Technology,
Delhi

THE STILLNESS WITHIN

Swami Muktananda, was teacher of Siddha meditation,
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FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography
compiled by Devendra Kumar

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury of
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The problem

AMIDST our faltering technological society, there is much talk of Indian spiritualism. Everytime something goes wrong, from electricity failures to atomic power plant shut-downs, people seem to withdraw into the comforting thought that these are all faces of the great illusion, and we have to delve deeper into our own very selves to discover the true reality.

Perhaps, this attitude is the only way people can survive amidst our mounting, leaping, problems of living. Yet, our forms of meditation took root not in the bewilderment of contemporary society, but in a long forgotten past when none of the problems of over-population mixed with the scientific and technological revolution were in evidence. Could the need for meditation then have been part of man's contemplative life, his search for the realities beyond and within him?

Apart from the physical effects of meditation, medical men have proved its cure in different fields, it is the releasing of a kind of mental energy which seems to catch and hold the imagination of many thousands, millions, in our country, and now in other parts of the world as well. Therefore, we thought it only proper that *Seminar* give the experiences of some who took to meditation and what it did to them and for them.

This may seem like a departure from our usual obsessive concentration with political, economic and social issues, but we thought that this might provide, perhaps, a clue to our complex psyche which sees little contradiction in performing elaborate rituals in conjunction with carrying on research in higher physics. Meditation, in fact, crossed the boundaries of Hinduism and Buddhism, spilling over into Sufism and Christianity as well.

Liberating the consciousness

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

I

BY what quirk or reversal of consciousness man first encountered the powers and processes of meditation must remain a mystery. The importance of the event is obvious. The capacity for contemplation is an index to personality. Meditation, key to mutation, opens up possibilities otherwise sealed. In the making of man, a demi-god emerging from the ape, meditation is the biggest breakthrough in the liberation of consciousness. How far it may go is anybody's guess.

Logic or science is itself a close-knit meditation. But the rule of analysis and abstraction is not absolute. Man is not just an object, a quantity. There is something else in him and it is the business of meditation to activate or realise this more, the kingdoms of the Self, level after level. Not altogether a creature of circumstances, man is also the lord or witness. The science of man naturally differs from the other sciences. Patanjali is as much of a scientist as Pasteur. The imbalance between the outer and the

inner cries out for reconciliation. Who will do it and how?

We become what we contemplate. In that endless becoming, a continuous subjective exploration, there must be various meditative practices and perspectives and fresh discoveries cannot be ruled out. In an ideal arrangement, every man will have his own system of free variation. It is best not to stereotype self-discovery and self-transcendence. As many men, as many methods. An integral approach has much to commend itself, one that will harmonize the claims of the body, life, mind and spirit. Also, since the group-soul is a fact, find a balance between the individual and society and the total man's (often forgotten) relation with reality, with the hidden and the unseen. The hidden may not be always holy or friendly. There are adversaries, inner energies that are enemies of the light. The sunlit path goes through dark nights of the soul.

If the fragment-being wishes to be whole, meditation, the art of awareness, a change in motivation and personality, by a return to the source of being, is a must. One of its inevitable results is peace, hard thing. Not merely the absence of hatred and aggressiveness, the long imprisonment in the first person singular, but also a compassion that passeth understanding. This alone fulfils rather than destroys, as we may learn one day, perhaps before it is too late. All men, they say, desire peace but few are willing to fulfil its inexorable conditions. The conditions boil down to one: a change of consciousness. If disaster is to be avoided, is there any other way out? As within, so without.

Without meditation man will be less than human. He may even cease to be. Meditate or perish!

II

Awakened man looks not only downward and outward but also upward and inward. That, probably, is how he chances upon the inner worlds, the higher powers and a significant space for his ultimate encounter and freedom. Traditional

and sacred psychology, a science of subjective experience, takes for granted that life is a means to an end beyond itself. If there are physical sciences, there are meta-physical sciences no less. To believe the wise, once our knowledge of the world has grown, we are impelled to seek another.

Man is a dweller in many dimensions. This earth alone is not our nurse and teacher. The powers of all the worlds have their entrance here. Our body is a mystery shop. Some time or other, in unguarded moments, or in disciplined plunge, a feeling for the hidden levels, 'other earths', comes almost to all men. As Wordsworth, the only poet to whom Sri Aurobindo refers in *The Synthesis of Yoga*, said: 'A meditation rose in me that night/Upon the lofty mountains and it appear'd to me/The perfect image of a mighty Mind,/Of one that feeds upon Infinity.'

Meditation is the mountain path to self-discovery. As is one's meditation so will be the man and his culture. Between Rodin's *Le Penseur* and the Sarnath Dhyani Buddha, between Descartes' *Meditations* and Pascal's *Pensees*, Husserl's *Fifth Meditation* and Patanjali's *Yogasutra* lie realms of being, the phenomenologist's plenty, the existentialist's Encyclopaedia.

Once more interest in yoga, *kundalini*, transcendental and even instant meditation has struck a new high, especially in the West, if not the East, the original home. There is a boom in what one of the Desert Fathers called 'the Science of Sciences and the Art of Arts'. The occupational hazards of being modern involve a series of deprivation. As Merleau-Ponty (*The Phenomenology of Perception*) pointed out, modern man has tended to jettison the subject and look upon the body as no more than the sum of its parts with no interior. When the Irish poet spoke of the 'Centre' unable to hold, he was not making a political or sociological judgment but describing our psychological collapse. To be adjusted to an unjust, unprincipled milieu of nothing but 'now' living — where 'My surface is myself' — is worse than not to be adjusted. To a hook-up of disvalues,

puppets and pantaloons, masked monsters and naked monomaniacs, can one really belong?

From all this superficiality and showmanship, meditation, its origins lost in prehistory, is a far cry. A Way of Return for such as wish to return, the traditional lores are full of these road maps. Keenly analytic and psychological, Buddhism especially is replete with these more than Sandow-exercises for the soul. The four marvellous states (*Brahmaviharas*) are their major ethical achievement; friendliness, compassion, joyfulness, indifference (*maitri, karuna, mudita, upeksha*).

A passage from ego to super-ego, reminding the ape of his essence is the highest common factor of every meditative programme. Beyond causality, contingency and conditioning, the scriptures, identifying the world's mind with ours, reach out to an unfaltering awareness of the relativity and non-origination of objects. The state of *nirvana*, *sunya* or *samadhi* is the true 'dying unto life', the life everlasting.

The height is not without its abyss and behind the stern classical stance we come across areas of darkness, morbid, macabre. The contemplation of the impurities, the skeleton, the Tantric orgies and the use of the skull as a drinking goblet come to the mind, romantic agony at its most rancid. The way down is the way up?

Modern spokesmen are far more moderate. The recent Vedantic anthology, *Meditation*, by the Monks of the Ramakrishna Order, is a model of sobriety. Swami Avyaktananda's *Universal Meditation* offers a simple, rational, seven-step practice, from rhythmic breathing to universal goodwill. In a slightly different key, Vimla Thakkar (*Meditation: A Way of Life*) defines it as 'an effortless and choiceless awareness'. Self-education by another name, it underlines Is-ness instead of I-ness. If all men have not earned the unconditioned enlightenment that is because without an inward turn and a passion for the beyond, the doors of perception will not open. To fulfil our being in the world we have to lift our eyes beyond it.

In *How Your Mind Can Keep You Well*, Roy Masters points to an old but neglected truth: that Self-government is a human tendency. One is reminded of Plato's 'inward government of the worse by the naturally better part of us'. To resist conditioning one must learn to be stimulated by 'the other side of the psyche', 'the unseen leader in the heart'. Non-response to what we call normal experiences is the way 'to starve the old roots'. Love is at once dispassionate and compassionate, not an easy combination. The less one does egowise, the more good happens. To be truly effective meditation should not be a part-time hobby or an annexe to living. Therefore, don't stop meditating.

The introspective bias of the Indian mind and society has given rise to different methods of developing the focus of the mind, among them the familiar triple paths: of work, knowledge and devotion. Common to all the paths is concentration with its three powers or characteristics. By its help we can know anything we like, possess whatever we wish to, and become what we think. More, we may become what we are. What we should finally strive for is of course the highest, Advaita's crown jewel of the Absolute, but — if our aim is integral — not by excluding that which it transcends. Not exclusion but integration is the better aim.

The path is old and others have gone before, along that razor's edge. From these experienced wayfarers comes the guide or the guru. The manuals lay down the marks, fairly exacting, of the guru. Essentially, he is a realised soul, also one who is able to communicate his experience to the disciple. In spite of the high respect shown to him, he is not arbitrary or unduly authoritarian. More of an elder than a big brother, the guru comes when the disciple is ready.

Such a guru alone has the right to initiate. Roughly, there are three kinds of initiation: *shakti*, *sambhavi* and *mantra*, working through the will of the Master, his touch or look, and the sacred syllable or formula. The idea of *mantra* — *mananat trayate iti mantrah*, that

which saves through contemplation — is allied to a sacred science of language. By the Word the world was made, by another it may be unmade. That the mantra can manifest even now comes out convincingly in the case of Sharon Brown, who recently cured herself of cancer by repeating *Om Namah Shivaya*.

As the Desert Fathers, the monastic orders and the European mystics will show, the contemplative life is not unknown there, though, perhaps, not so widespread or pervasive. One major distinction, between the Semitic and the Eastern tradition is that one is dualistic, the other non-dualistic. In the West to say, as we do, 'Thou art That (*Tattvamasi*)' or 'I am That (*So'ham*)' would amount to anathema. When Meister Eckhart announced, 'The eye with which I see God is the same with which He sees me' the Church looked the other way. The same unorthodox note can be heard in the title and content of another medieval classic *A Book of Contemplation the Which is Called Cloud of Unknowing in the which a Soul is Oned with God*.

Two false ideas have to be demythologised. First, that meditation is a gerontic occupation, for the old and the exhausted. The truth is the exact opposite; youth is the best time for initiation. What happens in its absence is there for all to see. Second, the life of contemplation is far from being a life of inactivity. In fact, the contemplatives alone have valid philosophy of action based on principles. One of these is non-attachment. The search for the health, wealth and happiness of mankind, the quest for freedom can never succeed through blatantly unpurified motives and methods. The saint alone knows how to defuse the entrenched forces of power and ignorance, whether of tyrants or of technocrats.

It is time to attend to the ancestral insights, the racial super-conscious. All here must learn to obey the higher law, what a modern novelist, Saul Bellow, has called 'an inadmissible resource, something we all hesitate to mention though we all know it intimately — the soul.' The curve of a rational-

individualistic-industrial age is bound to lead in this direction, towards a renewed, even enriched, subjectivity.

The Buddha's sermon on the Vulture Peak still reverberates. What the Thunder said can be heard even now. 'He who hears the Word sees Me.' 'He who knows the Law knows Me.' The world's torn heart cries out for a matching of the two know-hows, old and new. 'The Kingdom of God is for none but the thoroughly dead' is more than moonshine mysticism. In Nicholas of Cusa's lovely metaphor, the walls of Paradise are built with paradoxes.

To say that these things are mythical or mystical is not to explain them away but to hit the truth, to enhance their timeless endurance. The presentness of the past proves it to be perennial. Could it not also be the wave of the future? This is at least a high possibility because, as Toynbee has stated, the simple truth, the art of contemplation is really another name for the art of living.

The oldest applied psychology, meditation is also medicare; the remedy for the mind diseased as also of false self — views and essence — blindness. The way to the Self (*der Weg zum Selbst*) will always be subjective. As Krishnaprem (*The Yoga of the Kathopanishad*) put it beautifully, here is the universal medicine, that One Thing in fact which, under one name or another, has been the object of all sacred quests.

In the end is there any refuge other than the Lotus of the God Law? Agni, the fire of aspiration, is 'lotus-born'. The concluding lines of a Zen meditation bring the same news: This very earth is the Lotus Land of Purity, and this body the body of the Buddha. It is only our wholeness of being Bodhicitta, the Inner Sage, that heals the many and subtle wounds of separation, here and hereafter.

III

'Return to thy proper sphere, O mind', young Vivekananda had sung

before the Sage of Dakshineswar. It is the song of everyman. But where is the proper sphere? How does one get back to it, by what route? Guesswork follows guesswork, as hungry generations march across the noisy road to nowhere. Call it the Sphinx's riddle, *mysterium tremendum*, it is the mind of man that makes the world so baffling. We know so little of either.

Friend or foe? From savagery to civilization, down to the nightmare of the Nazis, when corpses were resurrected into soap, to keep the Master Race (*Herrenvolk*) clean, there is no error or crime to which human reason has not given its ready, if unwitting, assent. And now, like a maniac, the reality-killer forebodes its own destruction. The paradoxes of reason have been the cause of some of our profoundest humiliations. The ordinary consciousness can trigger off the most extraordinary chain reactions.

But why? The simplest explanation is the best; that out of a totality of events, relationships and dimensions, our outer directed, ordinary consciousness makes a partial, personal construct. It is this narrowly selective bit of consciousness, *coin de la creation*, that creates the existing categories. These in their turn keep us prisoners of the little self, all-too-human. Analysis, the language of linearity, at once separates us from all else, the not-self. But, in reality, if existence is indivisible, the not-self also must be self. As Herzog has said: Oneness is simply grotesque. Recently, Lasch has hit out against the modern West's long affair, a narcissistic preoccupation with what Sri Ramakrishnac alled the 'small-I'.

Such is the verdict of maturity, old and new. By whatever route, it is to this that one always returns. A large loyalty to the law of things hints at wider adjustments, a ministry of reconciliation beyond egoity, its pullulating conflicts and partialities. The correction is possible only through an integrative human potentiality. All about us, parted by the flimsiest of screens, veil after veil, lie potential forms of consciousness, what is now called the psi factor. Keyed to its over-

tones, to a world beyond the mirage of the visible, we feel we are greater than we know.

How to make the crooked straight, help the mind to its own transcendence? No subject is less understood than the human passion for self-exceeding. The passion exists in all of us and is bound one day fully to evolve. Centuries of avid extraversion and scientific cornucopia, based on a deliberate dualism, linear logic and other observational bias, have damaged the inner eye, an incalculable loss. As many have begun to feel and say, safety lies in being guided by the right brain instead of the pure left.

Perhaps, the most momentous discovery that man can make is that, in tried and untried ways, his mind and, still more, the power of the spirit, can overcome and control life and matter. Even technology is a left-handed compliment to the primacy of the mind. In nuclear and neurological research, not to forget the art of healing, science itself is beginning to find new bearings. Complementarity of mind and matter, subject and object, basic to the revaluation, seems as absurd and mysterious as when it was first encountered in the Samkhya.

The mind-body crux has been the recurring but inconclusive theme of all history and of more than one discipline. As Popper has pointed out, western philosophy consists of world pictures that are mostly variations of the dualism and the problem of method connected with these. But, then, how does one define or isolate the mind and consciousness? Are these quite the same as the body and the brain? Is it possible to equate, that is, logically connect, mental and physical energy or find an equivalence of 'statements'? So far no translating scheme has been found to be credible. Or, a disturbing thought, is it true, as the mystics hold, that we are but portions of a universal mind, a cosmic consciousness? Much, perhaps everything, depends upon the answer.

Increasing knowledge forces upon us the hypothesis, known of old, that consciousness uses the brain

which its own upward strivings, have produced. Brain does not produce nor does it use consciousness. In other words, the Force is anterior, not the physical instrument. Supposing the Force is also conscious, if not always on the surface? Such is the subjective view, not without a logic of its own.

By contrast, from Plato to Descartes, Hume, Ryle and Skinner, western thought has muddled through; moving from dualism, via the 'bundle' theory, it has brought us virtually to a dead end. Descartes found the body to be extended and unthinking, the mind to be thinking and unextended, a neat surgical operation that emptied the mind of teleology and hustled it into the court of physics. A person non grata, the autonomous man, became a myth and an anachronism. Thanks to our so-called scientific satraps, freedom may be lost without anybody being the wiser for it. Slave trade is back. The traders are called technocrats. It is a pity that physics and reductionism have been taken as models of science. But science is self-regulating.

Now psycho-biology, especially theories of evolution are about to give the mind-body situation another slant closer to the older views. But do they tell a straight story? Are there not missing links, quantum leaps? There is a rudimentary mind, an occult intelligence, in plants, animals and those that we are pleased to call inanimate objects. This is no doubt because the inconscient, our starting-point, is really an involved Superconscience, a higher dialectics known to the third eye. We can see that even the amoeba can be choosy about its food. The Venus flytrap will close only when a fly sits on it. The magnet selects iron fillings. Birds break eggs on stony surface. Is the human brain so different? Not different but with a different orientation. 'O the mind, mind has mountains.' We are, it would seem, not condemned to live only in the foothills; we may climb the peaks and make the abnormal normal. Some at least have done it.

From the reptilian to the mammalian brain, and the limbic cortex,

the shifts are astounding. But evolution has not ended. Unless we take the present organisation of consciousness to be the limit of its possibilities, at some point of experience we are bound to admit that the subjective and the objective are but complementaries. More, that man is at once contained within and himself contains the world in his thought. A galactic world, crossed by several energy-fields, claims the ascending spirit of man. A holistic vision alone can hope to match autonomy with homonymy, the self-governing process with the larger whole, if not the largest, his illimitable Self. There the mind's limiting firmaments cease, the landmarks of the little self fall.

The knowledge, renewable, has never lacked witnesses. On the basis of his experiments in mysticism, Ouspensky (*Tertium Quid*) found himself in a world entirely new and unknown, unlike anything we can surmise. First of all, he found everything is unified, everything is linked together, everything is explained by something else and in its turn explains another thing. The objective and subjective could change places. The irrational usage of reason against the subjective and the supra-physical is unscientific.

This is what the psychology of Yoga proves. A verified science of the inner, Yoga is no nostrum, system or fixed practice of withdrawal into the non-existent, but an eternal fact based on the very process and laws of the universe. Essentially, it stands on the fact that in this world we are one, yet divided. Yoga is the power of awareness which the soul has of entering into effective relation with other souls, with parts of its own self which are behind the waking consciousness, with forces and objects of nature, with the supreme Intelligence that governs the universe. The recovery of this lost dimension of course forms no part of our university syllabus and the mass media has never heard of it. The mutation will begin with the marginal men, outside the academic and the business community. Its chances of 'success', by worldly standards, are slender.

and civilization. The most improbable of events, the origin of life and mind in an apparently material and meaningless universe, has happened. Now there is need for a fresh leap, for a knowledge of the unified fields. To cast 'the kingdom old into another mould' another map of the mind is needed.

More than a package of psychopathology, man has immeasurable, untapped properties. A fixed inner milieu, said Claude Bernard, is the condition of a free life. This means that the old instruments have to be put to new uses. A mediator divinity, commuting between the heights and the abyss, the mind has to consent to its own change. The animal must become the gnostic being.

The limits of our physical evolution, largely unconscious, have been reached. Now on the change has to be conscious as well as psychosocial. What is so wrong about the suggestion? As everybody knows, for mammals homeostasis means survival, for man emancipation. How apropos are the words of Gray Walter (*The Living Brain*): 'The experience of homeostasis, the perfect mechanical calm which it allows the brain, has been known for two or three thousand years. It is the physiological aspect of all perfectionist faith — *nirvana*, the abstraction of Yoga, the peace that passeth understanding, and the derided happiness that lies within.' The convergence of eastern wisdom and western science is striking. As Fritjof Capra (*The Tao of Physics*) has put it: 'The basic elements of the eastern worldview are emerging from modern physics.'

The responsibility of the rapprochement is staggering: to go ahead or to fall back. At once chisel and block, overcome and overcoming, for the discontented human animal, the greater the disorder the greater the spur towards a more inclusive, a more urgent order. Only in psychic storms is the soul born. Only so can we discover what it is to be human now.

*Here the impossible union
Of spheres of existence is actual,
Here the past and the future
Are conquered, and reconciled.*

And, yet, if we have eyes, a new life is about to be born, the noons of the future, the beyonding of man

Technology of the unified field

BRIJESH KHINDARIA

IN this fickle and ever-changing world there is one certainty — that none of us can escape activity. We have no alternative but to be active although the type of activity differs. Even those of us who hibernate must submit at least to such reflex physical activities as breathing and heartbeat, and occasionally stir to the pangs of hunger.

Inevitably, activity raises the age-old question of how to ensure that it brings greater personal happiness and benefits society as a whole. Even the recluse hibernator likes to wake up refreshed and to maintain friendly relations with the bugs in his cave.

There is nothing metaphysical about the results of activity. Even the village idiot knows when something he does brings him satisfaction. The difference between him and a wiser man is that he is unable to discriminate between actions that bring a steady stream of satisfaction and those which shortly after the first flush of gratification bring disappointment and even suffering.

The chief difference between a starving thief and a starving saint is that the thief lacks the far-sightedness and fortitude that prevents a saint from filling his needs through actions which bring gratification marred by the fear of punishment.

All of us, including the village idiot, know from personal and undeniable experience that when we are tired our actions are less dynamic than when we are fresh. The reason, we know, is that when our perception is fogged by fatigue we think less clearly. We notice that the kind of fatigue does not matter. Even when the accumulation is mainly of physical fatigue, perhaps because we were too busy to sleep, our mind refuses to function properly.

Whatever else successful action might involve, being clear-headed is certainly its first precondition.

At least one automatic mechanism is built into our bodies to remove some of the fog in our heads caused by fatigue. That mechanism is sleep. If we push ourselves far

enough, we know that we simply collapse wherever we might be when the burden of strain, whether mental or physical, becomes intolerable.

But we also know that sleep does not get rid of all the fatigue we are carrying around with us. It is difficult to know how much sleep and in what conditions is optimum for the best rest.

Too much sleep can produce as much grumpiness as too little sleep. The straight fact is that this automatic mechanism for removing the fog in our minds is not reliable. Sleep is more like a safety net which usually prevents us from pushing ourselves too far by clearing just enough fog to keep us going. It is not a stress removal mechanism capable of making our minds continuously less foggy day by day.

Our most urgent need is to become increasingly clear-headed, not only to manage our own lives more satisfactorily, but also to make a creative contribution to our environment. Yet, our experience is that with the passage of time both these capabilities settle into a downward curve.

In summary, action is an inescapable necessity. Action might mean many things to philosophers but our most common experience about it is that its process expends energy which causes fatigue and reduced clarity of perception. That makes us less capable of acting to improve the amount and quality of satisfaction in our lives.

The fundamental issue then is how to prevent that inescapable fatigue from becoming so entrenched in us that it becomes a stress affecting our mental prowess, judgement and ability to use action as a proper servant of our intentions.

Every individual, no matter who or where, is stuck with this same core problem. Further, since the damage is to the mind within him, he alone can deal with it.

Whatever the advances of science, it is unlikely that we will ever reach a point where we can just walk into the All India Institute of Medical

Sciences to get a mind transplant. Nor will we ever be able to step into some magical shop where we can exchange our foggy minds for new untainted ones off-the-shelf.

So, none of us has an alternative to cleaning up his own mind of fog. Nor do we have an alternative to collecting the fog. The only choice we do have is to ensure that the fatigue or stress resulting from action enters us as a line drawn on water rather than a line on stone. We have no alternative but to somehow reach within ourselves to make things such that not only does today's fatigue disappear quickly but ancient stresses also begin to go.

We know that the only antidote to fatigue is rest. But what we do not know is how to get the kind of rest that removes all fatigue, new and old, in a way that does not make us feel like we suddenly lost all our money. If we are to rest in addition to sleep, we will have to find an action that provides the rest. Obviously, to be efficient, whatever action we do to have a rest will have to be such that it does not create fatigue of its own process.

It will have to be an action which once begun occurs automatically in a totally effortless manner, just as once a person has jumped off a diving board he falls automatically into the water. The diver might spoil the effortless automaticity of his fall if he suddenly becomes tense and makes an effort to either slow down or speed up the fall or to struggle out of the water. If the diver allows nature's process to occur, once he has sparked the process by diving correctly, he will smoothly fall into the water and resurface again with minimum or no effort. As dives go, his will have been an effortless one.

The purpose of this inadequate example is to say that an action which, once begun, makes use of the automaticity built into certain natural processes will be the most effortless, provided that we do not interfere with those processes.

Since the fog caused by our usual activity is in our minds and perception, to remove it we are forced to use a process that occurs in the

mind. Since the natural activity of the mind is to think, we are forced to use a process that involves thinking. We also know that thinking can cause mental fatigue so we have to use a method of thinking that avoids the creation of fatigue.

Obviously, any process of mental concentration will cause fatigue, so deliberate concentration is a definite no if we wish to clear up the fog in our minds.

Our common experience is that our mind automatically becomes focussed on a line of thought as soon as it experiences satisfaction. The experience of satisfaction is not something esoteric or mystical. When we think of something pleasurable, we actually feel satisfying sensations that are not imaginary although they are caused by the imagination.

The problem with simply thinking of something pleasurable to feel satisfied is that the feelings do not last and we soon become tired of trying to stop the mind from wavering. The question then is, how can we give the mind a concrete experience of satisfaction that holds its unwavering attention without any effort at all? The answer is that we learn to do the Transcendental Meditation technique taught by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi through qualified teachers trained by him.

The reason that this technique is the answer is that it allows the attention to dive into more settled and quieter areas of the mind using a catalyst called the 'mantra'. It is important to understand that we do not quieten the mind. Instead we dive into an area within it which is naturally quieter than the surface area.

That is why the technique is called Transcendental Meditation. We transcend — go beyond — each outer turbulent area of the mind into regions where the impulses manifested as turbulence on the surface are so small in size that they do not manage to disturb us.

Waves on the surface of an ocean are powerful and disturbing in their turbulence — much like our

thoughts often are. But within the ocean depth, the impulses which will later become massive waves are tiny bumps which do not inspire insecurity, although they are nothing but concentrations of the vast power which bursts upon the surface as a huge wave.

By the time the waves appear, the power has been dissipated. Yet, we fear the stormy surface while remaining undisturbed by the storm held in potential by the tiny bumps travelling outwards within the ocean.

Transcendental Meditation brings about a dive within the mind by using the mind's natural structure. We know that the natural structure of matter is such that every inner and more subtle aspect of it is more powerful than each previous outer layer. For instance, exploding an atom releases much more energy than does exploding a particle which contains millions of atoms.

The mind being a material entity has a similar structure in which every inner layer is more powerful and charming than each outer layer. Thus, when the attention turns inwards within the mind with the catalytic help of the *mantra*, it encounters ever more charming aspects of the mind, causing it to maintain the inward direction of the dive.

It dives to the point beyond which it cannot go any more and then moves outwards again. The process happens repeatedly and at great speed. Gradually, the experience of that point beyond which the inward dive cannot go is recognized. The main obstacle to that recognition is the inability of a stressed personality and physiology to stay alert at such a level of settledness.

Great alertness, that is, considerable absence of fog in the mind, is needed to recognize the delicate impulses in the mind's inner depths which later become the waves on its surface and are noticed as thoughts.

So, we find that getting rid of the fog — the fatigue, stresses and strain — within us is the first priority and the first step towards

making our actions servants for our fulfilment.

Does Transcendental Meditation provide the quality and quantity of rest that allows us to eliminate not only today's fog but the deepest rooted ancient stresses within us?

Yes, and there is absolutely no doubt about this. Volumes of authentic and well researched experimental evidence is available to demonstrate the benefits to health of the Transcendental Meditation practice. It has been demonstrated that the practice provides deeper rest than during deep sleep because the reflex bodily activities including heart-beat and respiration become considerably slower than in sleep. Breathing is suspended for long moments.

Transcendental Meditation does more than simply allow us to experience a settled and undisturbed state of mind. It enables us to experience that state of ourselves beyond which we cannot go. That is a state in which we are aware of being consciousness itself as separate and different from the objects, including feelings, of which we become aware because we are conscious.

Our experience is that consciousness exists of its own right, independently of everything. Because consciousness exists always and is unchanging, it provides the screen by reference to which all evanescent objects, including such invisible phenomena as feelings, gain existence. This experience of the separateness and all-pervading presence of consciousness, in its pure state, allows the experiencer to remain unperturbed even in the stormiest of turbulences.

It is crucial to understand that the lack of disturbance stems from equanimity and balance of mind which automatically occurs because of reduction of fog in perception. It has nothing to do with a pretence of 'detachment', 'indifference' or not being affected by gain or loss, pleasure or pain. The equanimity comes from experience of a state of constant plenitude which makes it unnecessary for the experiencer to run away from unpleasant duties or desperately prevent something pleasant from withering away.

This is a state of fulfilment and there is no room in it for such acts of refusal as 'detachment' and 'indifference'. Fulfilment allows the person to focus on achieving the intended results from his actions but saves him from wasting energy on ensuring that those results also bring him various rewards. Consequently, his actions are dynamic, intelligent and clear-headed. He soon becomes a 'Siddha' — a person whose every action achieves the intended result.

Transcendental Meditation should not be misunderstood to be a method of getting a rest and eliminating stresses. Those are welcome bye-products won along the way of us trying to experience ourselves as being bundles of consciousness in its pure state.

What Transcendental Meditation does is to produce integration and wholeness in our personalities. We begin to recognize through direct experience that the matter of which we are made is in fact pure consciousness that knows no boundaries, although as physical human beings we continue to operate within the boundaries of the capacities of our bodies. We locate the infinite within the bounded through a systematic process of direct experience.

There are many, though less perfect ways, of having a rest in addition to sleep. But no method other than transcending—going beyond the outer turbulence to the inner settled state of being—can bring the experience of wholeness of life. A *mantra* is the essential prerequisite to achieving such transcendence. The *mantra* has to be learnt from someone. It cannot be safely taken from books or hearsay.

Mantras produce different effects, just as some words produce a feeling of love and others simply feelings of friendliness. We need a *mantra* that allows us to achieve wholeness of life and successful action while remaining in our normal household environment and without having to change lifestyles. Through the gift of his Master, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has uncovered such *mantras* and is teaching them through trained

teachers of Transcendental Meditation.

What does a person growing daily towards wholeness — through two 20 minute sessions of Transcendental Meditation—contribute to his community? It has been found that when about one per cent of the people in a community practice TM, negative trends in the rest of the population diminish significantly. Crime, illnesses and violence are reduced.

That happens because a person practising TM enlivens pure consciousness within him. Since pure consciousness is indivisible, unchanging and the same everywhere, that enlivenment affects all of its other manifestations. Thus, although a person practises TM to improve his own life, he immediately benefits all of life everywhere through the mere act of doing TM.

If he then also behaves mercifully and charitably with those around him, he may produce even greater benefits. But the more important benefit stems from his practice of TM because on the level of behaviour he can only help a handful of people in a lifetime, whereas through the TM practice he enlivens pure consciousness everywhere. There is no greater duty than this.

In 1976, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi selected some special practices from the ancient work of Maharishi Patanjali and taught them to experienced practitioners of TM. The results of these additional practices, called the TM-Siddhi programme, were spectacular.

Practitioners found that by thinking of one of Maharishi Patanjali's formulas concerning 'passage through space', their bodies actually lifted off the floor. This was the first sign of levitation and is now practised by thousands of people around the world.

True levitation, such as remaining floating in the air for long periods, has not occurred. But practitioners find that without any physical attempt they bound across rooms in long hops. This technique is usually practised on a chain of mattresses because the hops can be painful on a hard floor.

The purpose of the TM-Siddhi programme, in which the 'flying' technique is the most dramatic, is to stabilize the practitioner's ability to think clearly and formulate desires at a point in the mind which is so quiet that one would normally find it hard to stay alert. As the practitioner becomes less forgetful and more able to remain alert on the edge of pure consciousness, he begins to exhibit more and more balance and independence in his daily behaviour.

The balance and independence comes because pure consciousness being a state of self-referral (whose existence is known of itself without reference to anything else) produces in the individual a sense of unshakable stability and centredness which nothing can overshadow at any time.

The TM-Siddhi programme is not practised to attain some mysterious or miraculous powers. Nor do any such powers come. It is a systematic method of testing one's ability to think from the edge of pure consciousness. Since everything springs from pure consciousness and is made of pure consciousness, it is a field of all possibilities from which anything can be done. Therefore, lifting the body off the floor through enlivenment of pure consciousness is not surprising.

In the field of all possibilities lie all the laws of nature which govern the transformation of pure consciousness into matter. Pure consciousness is the home of all the laws of nature while the field of matter is the domain in which those laws operate. Hence, a human being is simultaneously the home of the laws of nature and the product of their operation.

Consequently, he must become a transparent channel for both the formulation of intentions in the home of the laws of nature within him and the achievement of those intentions through unobstructed operation of the laws of nature.

On the level of behaviour, every action that violates the laws of nature functioning through a person produces negative results, experienc-

ed as some form of frustration, failure or suffering.

If our activities are in line with the laws of nature for us, we experience success and happiness. If they conflict with the functioning of the laws of nature, we experience problems. Since many of our actions today are in reaction to the results of yesterday's actions, we just have to somehow absorb any unpleasant results.

But we do have the choice today of doing actions which are in accordance with the laws of nature, so that the seeds sown for tomorrow's fruit are positive ones. Thus, we can on a daily basis create an increasing number of seeds for positive results and eventually overshadow any negative results from other seeds sown in our careless past.

The practice of the TM and TM-Siddhi programme puts us back in control of our destiny because we understand that tomorrow's fate is being created today. Above all, we know how to create a better fate by living more spontaneously according to the laws of nature to a greater degree than in the past.

The programme allows us to do this first by removing the fog in our perception. Then we begin to recognize and enliven pure consciousness and to integrate its value of stability in our daily behaviour. Above all, we become a more transparent channel for the smooth functioning of the laws of nature located in pure consciousness.

In recent years, it has been found that when just the square root of one per cent of a population regularly practises the TM-Siddhi programme, negative trends including violence and turbulence in the entire society are reduced. This happens because the practitioners produce a powerful influence of coherence in the collective atmosphere which reduces disorderly thinking among other people. The influence becomes even stronger if the practice is done in a group in one place, regardless of the degree of perfection of the practice.

To demonstrate this principle, Maharishi regularly sends groups of

experts near areas of turbulence. They sit in their hotel rooms and regularly do their complete programmes which take about 3-4 hours a day. It has been seen time and again that turbulence subsides. The latest example is as of the Philippines, where Maharishi sent several thousand such experts after the civil disturbances earlier this autumn. Within days the worst aspects of social turmoil subsided.

Very recently, physicists have demonstrated that all matter is a manifestation of a fundamental state which they call the 'unified field' because it unifies all the impulses and laws which cause matter to appear. This progress in modern knowledge has moved it closer to the assertions made by India's Vedic literature, persuading Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to rename the TM technique as 'the technology of the unified field'.

The technology is unique in its ability to give its practitioner a direct personal experience of the unified field, which is the home of all the laws of nature.

Maharishi is currently working to create unified field-based life on earth. That is, he is trying to create lifestyles at the individual and collective levels which are according to the laws of nature arising out of the unified field. The term unified field is a happy and revealing one because it clearly puts across in a simple manner what happens in the state of pure consciousness.

Pure consciousness unifies all the impulses which become matter — including us and all the material life around us whether known or unknown, visible or invisible, animate or inanimate. The enlivenment of pure consciousness also produces a strong influence of harmony in collective life because of its unifying influence.

Talk about unity should not be dismissed as metaphysics. Unity means that all separate and distinct impulses behave in a coherent manner with one another. That is what happens in the 'unified field' of physicists and in the pure consciousness referred to in Vedic literature.

Unity does not signify an absence of separateness. It signifies coherence among separate influences.

Vedic literature talks of oneness and 'samta' (or evenness) as being the state of 'parbrahm' (or pure consciousness). This should not be mistakenly understood as an absence of differences. What is meant is evenness among differences. That is why the behaviour of those who have enlivened the unified field in their awareness exhibits balance, equanimity and absence of disturbance.

Serenity is not some metaphysical or abstract state of relaxed passivity or emptiness. It is the ability to enter extreme turbulence without being affected by it, as did Shri Arjun when he entered the war described in the *Mahabharata* and the *Bhagvat-Gita*.

Skill in action is not some strange state of not caring for results or being indifferent to pain or pleasure or being somehow detached from the desires underlying actions. It is the dynamic commitment of Shri Arjun who enters the war in the awareness that he will not know which way the chariot will turn since the reins are held by another. Yet, he is so hyper-alert that he shoots the right arrows without seeing the opponent the charioteer saw before making the turn. Shri Arjun is completely committed to winning the war. He is not uncaring of results nor detached or indifferent.

But in his intense focus on doing the right action, for its own sake, he does not consider what rewards success might bring him. That is why he has been set up as an example for us by our forefathers of a person ideally skilled in action.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's technology of the unified field, as it is now called, is designed to make us so ideally skilled in action. At the same time, it enables us to serve others in the way that counts most — from within as well as from without.

Modern education prepares us for careers and gives us a lot of useful information about certain aspects of our personal and professional

lives. But the fundamental element is missing. It does nothing to help us to be healthier and happier persons.

The simple fact is that we are human beings first and doctors, lawyers, housewives, politicians, etc., second. Nothing in our education prepares us for being better human beings.

The fundamental question regarding who it is that is doing the learning is not even addressed because it is seen as belonging to the domain of metaphysics. The stark fact is that without increasing our capacity to learn and to behave intelligently, stuffing us with ever increasing amounts of complex information cannot but aggravate our personal and collective problems.

The technology of the unified field is an apolitical, non-religious activity. Whatever our background and affiliations, all of us need to unfold our full potential as human beings and every society needs to move towards an ideal one.

Introducing this technology in India's schools system is an urgent necessity to reduce the disorderly behaviour which is currently tearing our nation apart. A first step may be to provide facilities in one place for 6000-7000 experts of the technology of the unified field to come immediately to India to produce a calming influence in this turbulent political period. The next step would be to set a longer-term programme in place in collaboration with Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

All problems arise from individual violations of the laws of nature which not only create trouble for the violators but also gather as tension in the collective atmosphere and eventually erupt as collective calamities.

The only permanent solution is to live life according to the laws of nature at our own individual level and to install life according to those laws at the collective level. The technology of the unified field is a time-tested method of achieving this.

Vipassana awakening

V. N. ARORA

IN this article I shall make an attempt to answer the following questions: (a) what is meant by Vipassana? (b) What made me take up the practice of Vipassana? (c) What is there in Vipassana that has sustained my interest in it? (d) What is the philosophy on which its practice is based? And, finally, (e) why do I recommend it to others?

At the very outset I want to apologise to the readers for bringing in the subjective element but, as will become clear soon enough, it cannot be helped. In an article of this nature, one has to fall back upon one's experiences, and it is these experiences that lend authenticity to what one says. And now to Vipassana; it does not give much importance to 'I' anyway.

Vipassana, literally, means seeing in a special way — seeing the absolute truth and not the apparent

truth. What is the absolute truth cannot be answered straightaway; therefore, we examine the truth as it manifests itself from moment to moment in the form of sensations in the human body. Vipassana, in short, is the technique of experiencing one's own reality by observing systematically and dispassionately ever-changing sensations within oneself. It is Indian in origin, discovered, practised and preached by Gautam, the Buddha, with a view to liberating mankind from suffering and the cycle of birth and death. Monks who went from India to distant lands taught it to their disciples as the only path to *nirwana*. While it retained its pristine purity in the *guru-chela* tradition in Burma, it got corrupted or lost in other parts of the world, including India.

It has come back to its native land after two thousand and five hundred years and is now being taught by S.N. Goenka. For its

propagation, he has established an ashram, called the Vipassana International Academy, at Igatpuri, in the Nasik district of Maharashtra. Grateful beneficiaries have opened two more centres at Jaipur and Hyderabad, where residential courses are offered throughout the year, free of charge. In addition to these centres in India, there are centres in Nepal, the UK, the USA and Australia. Courses have been conducted in temples, churches and mosques because Vipassana is for the liberation of all mankind; not this sect or that. Its appeal is universal. More of this later.

Looking back at my own experience, I think, it is little short of a miracle how I was hooked. In December 1983, I was staying at the guest house of the American Studies Research Centre at Hyderabad. One day, a stranger, whom I had been seeing at the dining table for a couple of days, casually asked me if I would join him in an after-dinner walk. In the course of the walk, he introduced himself as Professor Chandra Shekhar from IIM Ahmedabad — I hope I have got the name right. We talked of our areas of specialization and what we were engaged in then. And then he sprang a surprise, for he said, 'I think the time has come when your life is going to take a turn in a different direction. You have attained certain eminence in your field but now your interests are going to change. You'll be turning to things of the spirit, and not so much of the mind.'

And when I asked how he could tell, he replied that he could sense it. This mysterious answer was a little difficult for me to swallow, so I protested. The gentleman heard my protest in his stride and went on to add that our meeting was no accident and that other so-called 'accidents' would occur very soon that would direct the course of my life in the direction indicated by him. And sure enough they did.

In January 1984, a colleague of mine at the IIT, invited me to a talk by S.N. Goenka at the Senior Staff Club of the IIT, which was followed by lunch. Goenkaji was an effective speaker. He explained what the technique of Vipassana was and

what one should expect if one practised it. I was intrigued by what he said: 'Don't believe anything I say unless you have experienced it for yourself.' I bombarded him with questions. He answered some of them and for the rest he said, 'Theoretical answers are of no use. Join one of the camps and you'll get all the answers.'

Partly it was this challenge and partly an emotional crisis in my own life that had been hanging fire for over a year that made me join a ten-day Vipassana meditation camp, held at Hotel Palace, Chail (Simla hills) in April 1984. I have never been able to tolerate the mumbo jumbo of religion; so I went to Chail in a strange state of mind: on the one hand I was sceptical of what had been promised and on the other, in fairness to Goenkaji, I was keeping my mind open. Also, I was seeking a solution to my problem.

It was a memorable experience of which I have written at length elsewhere (*Humanities Review*, 1985). All my questions were answered but there was a lingering doubt in my mind: could Goenkaji be using some sort of mass hypnotism to convince us that we had actually undergone that experience? The faces of about two hundred and fifty men and women, including about one hundred and twenty foreigners, glowed with joy at the end of ten days. I tried to convince myself that all these people — professors, priests, businessmen, house-wives, company executives, one ex-mayor of Delhi, mill owners — could not be mistaken. However, the doubt remained.

So, I went to Jaipur in June 84 for another ten-day camp which was not being conducted by Goenkaji. It was Ram Singh (ex-Home Secretary of the Rajasthan Government, now working as Assistant Teacher of Vipassana) who set my doubts at rest. I got a deeper understanding of what Vipassana had done to me. On Ram Singh's advice I went to Igatpuri in December 1984 for a thirty-day camp. Every experience of a Vipassana camp has confirmed my belief that it is the authentic thing. To date, I have no regrets; rather I am glad that I got this opportunity. Prof. Chandra Shekhar had sensed

the trend correctly; my life has taken a definite turn in this direction.

Stating a few reasons that have sustained my interest in Vipassana will be like picking out a few beautiful pearls from a basket full of pearls. A complete answer will emerge only after I have explained what Vipassana means to me; however, a few reasons are being stated, just to fill in the blanks.

When I returned from Chail, the sharp edge of the personal crisis was already blunted. The ache remained but its intensity had lessened considerably. After the second course in June, only the scar of that psychic wound was left. And now, after the third camp, even the scar has become less deep because, metaphorically speaking, the skin where the scar is has become sensitive again. Secondly, pain in the lumber region of the back, from which most people in sedentary jobs suffer, is not so acute. Nagging headaches which forced me to take pills very often have almost disappeared.

Thirdly, I feel a new vitality within me; and as a result I can do much more work than before. At the end of the day there is no feeling of exhaustion; I could go on working if there were no other duties. Fourthly, whenever adverse conditions develop, I feel less upset than ever before. Life seldom is a bed of roses, and the practice of Vipassana gives me the courage and equanimity to face these ups and downs. And, finally, I have found a path, a direction, to lead me to a goal. The more I practice, the clearer the goal becomes. Vipassana has given me a sort of peace of mind and stability that I could not dream of a year or so back.

Attending a Vipassana meditation camp is like conducting an experiment on oneself in a laboratory. Certain physical, mental and psychological conditions are created that are conducive to producing good results and, then, at the end of the ten-day period, it is hoped that transfer of training will take place. What one learns in the camp is equally valid in one's everyday life. So the quality of life undergoes a change for the better. Let me des-

cribe the life in the camp and how it affects one's mundane existence.

At the start of the camp, one is asked to take a vow: I shall not kill, steal, commit sexual misconduct, tell lies, or use intoxicants. This forms the basis of *sheel* or good conduct. With a view to avoiding any disturbance in the mind, speech is forbidden. Nor should one communicate with others in writing or with gestures. No newspapers, no TV, no radio, no letters; so one's attention is turned inwards. On the very first day one makes a formal request to the teacher to teach the participants *Anapaan* — how to observe one's ingoing and outgoing breath. It is the first step. One does nothing else for the next three days.

In one stroke, one has done away with all icons, images, rituals, *mantras*, paraphernalia of worship like lamps and candles and incense and flowers. All that one needs is a quiet place to sit, a willingness to meditate and an alertness of mind to record every ingoing breath and every outgoing breath. All one's attention is focused on the entrance of the nostrils and the area below the nostrils and above the upper lip to perceive any sensations that may be felt there.

This single-mindedness leads to *samadhi* — the state in which the consciousness has been cleared of all extraneous thought and is occupied by one thought only. Initially, nothing seems to be happening in this area — all one notes is the place in the nostrils where the breath is felt, whether one nostril is working or both, whether the breath is hot or cold — but as time goes by and one's powers of perception develop, the area seems to hum with activity. Besides an occasional itch, pulsation, feelings of hot and cold, one notices that in this region there is a nerve centre which sends out waves to different parts of the face. Initially, these ripples are mild but they grow in intensity with time.

Once this power of perception has developed, roughly in three days, one makes a request to the teacher to teach the participants Vipassana. In this one is asked to scan one's entire body limb by limb, part by part, starting

from the head, for any sensation. Again, initially, nothing seems to be happening anywhere but then different sensations begin to appear in different parts of the body. These may be throbbing in some parts, pain in some others, heat elsewhere, itching, etc.. Two things have to be borne in mind all the time: no sensation that has appeared anywhere in the body should go unnoticed, and that these sensations are ephemeral and will eventually disappear. This is the Law of Impermanence that the Buddha taught which governs the entire universe.

Roughly, on the seventh day, the teacher asks the participants to focus their attention on that part of the skull which is soft in a new-born child, and from that point a sort of electric current shall start flowing downwards, permeating the whole body, to the tips of the toes. If the *samadhi* has been good, this is bound to happen, and when the current starts flowing, one is startled, at least when it happens for the first time.

There is nothing unusual in this phenomenon because throughout the human body bio-chemical-electrical activity is taking place all the time. All one has done is to have become conscious of this activity and given it a direction. With some practice one can make this current flow in any direction and in any part of the body. And, later on, one can make it traverse the space between two unconnected parts. And when it passes through some part of the body situated between the two parts, it registers its flow. At times this current can be as powerful as the flow of a mighty river and it is this flow of energy that heals lesions — like diathermy — as well as washes away accumulated impurities in the human body leading to a cure of diseases like rheumatism and arthritis.

In its penultimate stage, the nerve centre called *bhovan* situated just below the joint of the last ribs and a little above the diaphragm, becomes active. From this centre waves of energy radiate in all directions to the extremities of the body. In the final stage the nerve centres situated in the head, the area of the mous-

tache, and the *bhovan* pulsate in unison. This is a very enjoyable experience, much superior to the kick obtained from intoxicants or drugs, and there are no side-effects.

I do not want to create the impression that it is all fun. Life in a Vipassana camp is austere like that of a monk. It starts at 4 in the morning and by 4.30 everybody settles down to meditate. The first session lasts for two hours and at 6.30 breakfast is served. The second session starts at 8 and goes on up to 11. Lunch is served at 11 and participants take rest until 1. The next session starts at 1 and goes on until 5. At 5, new-comers are served fruit and milk tea and the old students get only *nimbu pani*. The last session starts at 6 and goes on until 9 p.m. After a half an hour session of questions and answers the participants retire to their respective rooms.

Before the question-answer session, there is a discourse by Gururji on some aspect of Vipassana. Even when he is not conducting the course, a video-tape is played and you can see and hear him as if he were present. The last session on the tenth day is devoted to praying for peace in the world and expressing goodwill towards all living beings: 'If I have earned any merit by this *tapasya*, I share it with all living beings. May all beings be happy! May they all be liberated from the cycle of birth and death!'

The practice of Vipassana is based on a sound philosophy which states that most human beings are unhappy and that they would like to seek liberation from *dukha* (pain, sorrow and sufferings). It goes on to add that the 'I' that suffers is nothing but the coming together of *rupa* (matter) and *nama* (energy) temporarily so that my *sanskaras* may work themselves out. According to the Buddha, whenever an action is performed — it may be a physical or verbal action or just a thought — it is accompanied by some sensation in the human body and it leaves an impact upon the mind.

This impact on the mind is called a *sanskara* and these *sanskaras* are

carried by the mind from one birth to another. So long as these *samskaras* are not eradicated from the mind, it will continue to attach itself to a body so that various past longings and aversions can find an outlet. In the process of letting the old *samskaras* come out, i.e., in life, a person begins to like pleasant experiences and hate unpleasant ones, thus giving birth to new *samskaras*. On this path lies no *nirwana* (the end of *samskaras* and hence liberation from the cycle of birth and death). With *dukkha*, one will have to stop seeking pleasure also, because both of them create new *samskaras*.

To end all *samskaras*, old as well as new, one will have to adopt a dual approach: to prevent the formation of new ones and to eradicate old ones. To achieve the former, there must be neither any attachment to pleasant experiences nor any aversion to unpleasant ones. It does not mean that one must renounce life; all that is required is an attitude of equanimity towards all experiences — pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. This attitude of equanimity is called *pragya* — knowledge or wisdom — but it is not easy to develop. Even if one develops *pragya*, it takes care of the present and the future; what about the past *karmas* and the *samskaras* that they have generated which will continue to determine one's conduct? And how should one develop *pragya*?

Answers to both these questions lie in the practice of Vipassana. The foundation of Vipassana is *sheela* (good conduct). Observance of certain norms (the five vows) of conduct in the camp prevents the mind from wandering away because they restrict its activity. *Anapaan*, the first step in Vipassana, is a training of the mind in the art of focusing itself on one thing only. Together, both of these — *sheela* and *anapaan* — create the state called *samadhi*, in which the consciousness is freed of all extraneous thoughts and is focused on the point or idea.

Only in good *samadhi* is Vipassana possible. The observation and awareness of various sensations in the body, including the flow of energy,

leads one to the conclusion that all is ephemeral. And if all — material things, sensations, time, thoughts — is ephemeral, one is bound to come to the inescapable conclusion that it is unwise to adopt any attitude other than that of equanimity towards it. This realization is the awakening of *pragya*.

Initially, this wisdom pertains only to the experience that gives birth to it, i.e., the sensations that one experiences in the course of a meditation session, but at a later stage one takes the inevitable step of extending it to experiences of everyday life. So, *pragya* that one has acquired in the course of meditation can look after one's conduct in the present and also one's attitude to these experiences. *Pragya* strengthens *sheela*, which gave birth to *samadhi* which led to *pragya*, and hence, while they reinforce one another, the meditator goes on climbing higher rungs of the ladder of awareness. Together, *sheela*, *samadhi* and *pragya* constitute the eight-fold noble path shown by the Buddha.

So far I have explained only how Vipassana prevents the formation of new *samskaras*; it still remains to be explained how Vipassana can eradicate old *samskaras* as well. As it has been stated earlier, every action that one performs is accompanied by some sensation in the body. There is a unique relationship between that action or set of actions and that sensation. In other words, there is a unique relationship between the *samskara* created by that action and the sensation that accompanied that action. If that sensation was pleasant, one craves for its recurrence; if it was unpleasant, one hates its recurrence. The individual, thus, is at the mercy of these desires of craving and aversion. If one can rise above these desires, if one can maintain equanimity when these desires assert themselves, their stranglehold is weakened and then broken.

It is the experience of most meditators that it is difficult to anticipate that sensations will be perceived in a particular sitting. The logic which determines which sensation will make its appearance is beyond the

powers of ordinary mortals, but what one can do is to be aware of its appearance, existence and disappearance. Since it is a sort of 'objective correlative' of a certain *samskara*, that *samskara* from one's past — of this life or any other — is seeking expression.

Vipassana creates an opportunity for the meditator to be aware of this phenomenon. If he maintains equanimity towards that sensation — good or unpleasant or neutral — he has not reinforced that particular *samskara* and as an old building which is not being given a coat of paint and maintained properly will ultimately collapse, so will the *samskara* be eradicated. This is what *dharma* does, *dharma* under whose umbrella the meditator has sought shelter. A sort of catharsis of *samskaras* takes place when they do not find fresh reinforcement in one's conduct — *sheela* — now.

In this way even the old *samskaras* will be eradicated. *Pragya* thus leads one to a peaceful state of mind. So, a good meditation session is not the one in which the pleasant sensations dominate; it is that session in which one has succeeded in maintaining equanimity towards all sensations — good, bad and neutral. A good session strengthens *pragya*, the wisdom (born out of experience) that all is ephemeral. A mind guided by *pragya* is on the road to *nirwana*, though initially it will experience only a blissful or peaceful state.

My conviction that this is how one can seek liberation is based partly on what I have accepted on faith, partly on circumstantial evidence and partly on personal experience. Let me explain further. In the three camps that I have attended and in the course of the practice of Vipassana for whatever time I could spare, most of the promises made by Goenkaji in his initial talk in January '84 at the IIT have been fulfilled. I have tested the worth of Vipassana in the crucible of my own experience. I am told that the rest of the knowledge will come with the regular practice of Vipassana.

Since Goenkaji says that he has experienced this knowledge for him-

self, I have accepted his word on faith. His has been a selfless service to mankind; therefore, I cannot see any reason why he should tell a lie. Moreover, meditators of much longer standing than me — and I must confess I am only a novice — affirm independently what Goenkaji says. The sermons of the Buddha lend further support to this philosophic belief.

Partial support, however, has come from a very different area, i.e., science. Neuro-surgeons and psychologists accept the fact that in the human brain there is a faithful record of all that one has experienced. Subjects in whose skulls electrodes were inserted to stimulate different parts of the brain, have recalled the minutest details of some past experience, and relived that experience, including a change in voice if it was a childhood experience. It has not been possible so far to identify which part of the brain stores which experience, but there is no uncertainty about the existence of the record and the possibility of its recall.

It will not be out of place to state that psycho-therapy and hypnosis utilize this record and the powers of recall. Vipassana, in a state of *samadhi*, recreates the sensations that accompanied the original action, and through its catharsis breaks its obsessive control on the mind of the meditator. Even if we confine ourselves to the actions of this birth, it is by no means a mean achievement to be liberated from them.

That Vipassana practice can be used for ends other than spiritual, need not be contradicted. For example, some persons having learnt that the awakening of certain centres in the body leads to an enjoyable feeling have concentrated on just that awakening. They call it *kundalini* awakening. One can feel sorry for them because they are satisfied with so little. Similarly, the Chinese system of curing certain diseases through acupuncture is nothing but stimulating certain nerve centres artificially from outside. In Vipassana, the entire body is awakened, not just a few centres.

Naturally, one of the benefits that one derives early in the practice of Vipassana is the cure of some ailments that seemed incurable. Also, if there is a relationship between suffering and *sanskaras*, as it has been explained earlier that there is, and if Vipassana eradicates old *sanskaras*, it seems logical to assume that the practice of Vipassana will eliminate that suffering or pain. These advantages are, in fact, no more than by-products; the real goal is peace of mind, and *nirwana*, if possible.

There are some other aspects of this philosophy that have appealed to me. First and foremost is the emphasis on ego-lessness. The 'I' is not at all important because what is called I — and its derivatives me, my, mine etc., — is nothing but layer after layer of *sanskaras* which when peeled off, like the peels of an onion, have no core. A characteristic way of putting it is the saying that there have been many Buddhas before and after the Buddha. Even the Buddha is not unique, not to speak of ordinary mortals. One could learn a lot from this attitude of humility. In order to teach the participants in the meditation camp this humility, they are treated as *bikshus*, monks who live on alms.

I also admire the emphasis that is given to free will in Vipassana. On the one hand it is recognized that 'I' is no more than a temporary coming together of mind and matter for the working out of the *sanskaras* that the mind carries, on the other it is recognized that I have the freedom to break away from this determinism through the practice of Vipassana.

Similarly, the teacher is to be respected for showing the path but he cannot do anything more than that; it is for the individual to follow that path and reach his goal. Nobody else can shoulder the burden of my *sanskaras*; I will have to seek my own salvation.

To reach that goal I have to seek shelter under the umbrella of *dharma* — the path in life that does not go against the laws of nature of which man is a part. And the path of

dharma is universal. It is neither Hindu *dharma*, nor Jain, nor Buddhist, nor Christian. It is just *dharma*, plain and simple, which can be practised by one and all.

Another facet of Vipassana is its concern for the present — the here and now of an individual's existence. Irrespective of what its practice may do to one's next life, it is emphasized again and again by Goenkaji that Vipassana must improve the quality of one's life now. The proof of its success lies in the fact that there are very few individuals who having attended one camp have not returned to attend others. By now over nineteen thousand people in different parts of the world are practising Vipassana.

Vipassana brings about a silent revolution in the life of an individual. Since individuals constitute a community, Vipassana is changing and will continue to change the life of the community. And my guess is that it may turn out to be the most revolutionary but bloodless revolution of this century.

And now the last question: why do I recommend it to others? The answer to this question is implied in what I have written already; therefore, my explicit answer will be very brief. In Vipassana there is something for everybody. For the sick, there is health, but that should not be the main motivation. For the ambitious, Vipassana is the key to efficiency and worldly success. For the troubled mind, there is peace, which is no mean reward. For the seeker, even the sky is not the limit. And on the international scene, it is the only hope of survival for mankind, for the meditators pray for the happiness and well-being of all beings, not just mankind.

A word of warning: it will be advisable to go to a camp for learning the technique, even though there are no rites of initiation. Personally, to date, I have no regrets whatsoever; on the contrary, I regard myself fortunate in having been introduced to Vipassana. Not only that, I have not met anyone who is critical of either the practice or the philosophy. There is nothing to lose; why not give Vipassana a chance to help you?

The tortoise instinct

SURESH UPADHYAY

SLOWLY I started going up. Nobody pulled; I just floated. I moved upwards till my head hit the ceiling like a balloon at a birthday party. The grated iron door was down there, far below me. The lantern still flickered. I could no longer see the warder, who sat dozing at the gate. Time had stopped; so did my heart, I thought. It must have lasted a minute, or maybe more. I found myself sweating. My under-shirt was completely drenched. It could

not have happened all of a sudden; I must have been sweating for quite some time.

That was on a December night in 1976 in the cold solitary cell No. 9 of the Central Jail at Fatehgarh where I was confined as a political detenu.

Initially, it was scaring. Fear gripped my heart and then everything went numb. I wanted to move

but I could not. I looked helplessly across the door. The warder was still there dozing with his head on his knees. I pulled off the quilt which I had thrown over my shoulders and asked the warder to get me some water. I drank some and the rest I splashed on my head. It was something. The warder later told me that my face had looked red and puffed up, with eyes larger than normal.

Since my detention in September 1975, it has been a practice with me to do *japa* every night till I go to sleep. I did not start doing this *japa* as a ritual or out of some religious faith; I started doing it to take my mind off sex. Solitary confinement can break anyone if he does not retain his sanity either through reading or meditation and *japa*. Apart from his cell the only thing a detenu has are his memories, and the strongest of them all are those of women he knew and those he did not know so well. It is painful to think of women in a prison cell. After my evening meal, each night, I would sit on the hard floor or recline against the wall with my quilt thrown over my shoulders and start doing the *japa*. During the hot months I would use a bedsheet to wrap around me. I always sat facing the iron gate of my cell.

Nobody taught me how to do the *japa*. It had been a part of my *sanskara*. I come from the Braj area where Lord Krishna is a living presence in every household. We do not regard him as God but a *Sakha* (a friend) instead. Later when I grew up, the *Bala Krishna* grew into *Dwarakadheesha*. Bhagwan Krishna in the *Dwarakadheesha* form is my *Ishta*. To me it is not a form or an image; He is a living being like you and me. Complete dedication and sublime devotion to Him is my path. Maybe one can call it *Bhakti Yoga*.

The incident I have just narrated, at first sight seems like something that I had imagined, maybe because of my loneliness or highly tense mental state. Maybe, I had dozed off for a while and it was a bad dream, and when I got up I was so shaken that I started perspiring. But when I

started rationalising the whole thing there were three pieces that would not fit into place. Firstly, I could not have dozed off because I was wide awake all along. When I floated upwards I was aware of my going up. I saw myself coming up to the level of the gate, then going above it, and finally, being far above it I saw the lantern and not the warder whom I saw when I sat facing the gate.

Secondly, if it were a dream I would remember something of it; one does not forget bad dreams so easily. But the most important thing that convinced me of it as an experience was that I did the *japa* with my eyes closed and meditating on my *Ishta*. When I felt that I was going up, I opened my eyes and saw myself going up past the gate. I looked downwards and saw the lantern but not the warder who was there just across the gate.

I knew that it was neither a dream nor make-believe. It had happened. I knew what had happened but I did not know how? Before this I did not know anything about Yoga or meditation. I believed that it was meant for *sanyasis*, whom I considered deviants, drop-outs and those who had given up the world. Whereas I was not only living in this world, I was involved in it — involved to the extent that the government considered me dangerous enough to put me behind bars for eighteen months, all through the Emergency.

There is no philosophy to explain my form of Yoga. Philosophy grows out of logic and reason. In my case there has been just faith and nothing else. In short, my path is simple. I sit comfortably, take a *mala* and start the *japa*. The *japa mantra* is not a secret. I heard my grandfather recite it; I heard my father recite it; and, therefore, I also decided to do the same. It is '*Om Shri Dwarikadheeshave Namah*'. While I am doing the *japa*, it is an effortless act. I do not even know that I am doing it but I concentrate my mind on the idol of Lord Krishna in the *Dwarikadheesha* temple of Mathura.

Until a few years ago while I did the *japa*, I never made any effort to fix my mind on the *Ishta*. Now it is

a synchronised act. As a matter of fact the *japa* is secondary; meditation on my *Ishta* is primary. It is more pleasure-giving as well. I have often found that the *japa* goes on automatically. For meditation, I do a few breathing exercises. The best way to control the mind is to control one's breath. The slower the breathing, the slower the activity of the mind.

There are many other exercises for developing concentration and achieving zero thought for a few moments at least. What I have found more practical is that if the thing you are concentrating on is beautiful, pleasant and stimulating, other thoughts will not enter your mind for quite some time. You can see for yourself: if you concentrate on someone you love, the mind would stay there longer than if you had thought of somebody else. Therefore, *Ishta* is one whom you have always loved and looked up to in need.

Why did I need an *Ishta*? Why an *Ishta* with a form? I need an *Ishta* because I cannot think, let alone do *dhyana* (concentrate upon), of anything abstract. If I am asked to think of light, I cannot think of it as an abstract phenomenon — as not dark. I will think of light only in association with the sun, a lamp, lightning and such other manifest forms of light. I think of water only as an expanse of water or as a drop — that is with a form, although water has no form. Likewise, in order to think of *Ishwar* — do his *dhyana* — I need a form to concentrate upon. If I were born in Bengal. I would have Mother Durga as my *Ishta*, in place of Lord Krishna, or if I had been born an Arya Samajist, I would have chosen the *Pranava Om*.

Om is not a word, it is a *Pranava*, the *nirakar* form (formless form — not a form as we know). It is a symbol for *Ishwar* as H_2O is for water. What H_2O means to a scientist, so does *Om* signify God to a *sadhak* (one who does *sadhana*). As the symbol H_2O defines the molecular structure of water, so does the *Pranava Om* stand for *Ishwar*. It means the past, the present and the future; to create, to sustain and

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to destroy; the three worlds; *sat*, *chit* and *ananda*, and so on. Depending upon my *sanskara* I would have chosen for my *dhyana* either from a *sakara* form, as I did, or from the *nirakara* form.

How did I come to regard the Chaturbhuj (four-armed) Krishna as my *Ishta*? It is very unusual for any person from my area to even think of Krishna without Radha. It is always the *yugal* (due) form. In my case the choice is not only unconventional, it is rare as well. As a child I loved *Bala Krishna* (Child Krishna)—a very common practice; and Hanuman—an equally common practice. It happened all of a sudden. One day while attending the *Aarati* in the Dwarkadheesha temple in Mathura, I felt it is him. Yes it is him I always wanted to love. I could not take my eyes off him. I was not aware of anything around me except him. I stood there as if fixed to the ground. I knew it is he who I submit myself to. I then found that I was quietly repeating the *mantra* 'Om Shri Dwarakadheesha Namah' to myself.

In order to find out who your *Ishta* is going to be, try to concentrate on all the forms of God that you are familiar with. The one that appeals to you most, the one you get drawn to again and again is your *Ishta*. You are programmed to do his *dhyana*. Any other *Ishta* will be a distraction. *Japa mantra* is what you tell your *Ishta*. My *japa mantra* expressed my feelings for him. Although he does not speak, I feel his presence all the same. He just looks at me and I seek meaning in it.

I hope one day we will just look at each other and there will be nothing more to say. Words will not be necessary then. *Japa mantra* will no more be needed. Even now it is me who needs words, and not him. We have a strange relationship: he is my *sakha* and my master simultaneously. I am looking forward to a day when I will drop the *japa mantra* and the communication is not broken.

My *japa mantra* begins with an address 'Om'. It is something like saying 'Daddy!' or, 'Honey!' or,

'*Sunti ho!*' It is what you perceive him as. I see him as 'Om'. I have already explained what 'Om' denotes. Then his name: 'Dwarakadheesha'. He is elder to me and therefore the honorific prefix 'Shri'. And, finally, the message 'Namah'. I am at your command; I am at your service; I stand with folded hands awaiting your signal.

Incidentally the *Pranava* Om (AUM) signifies to me something very unusual as well. 'A' is the open front vowel, the first sound of all alphabets. On the mouth chart, 'A' is the first sound. It is humanly impossible to produce a sound from a more front position. That is the beginning. The second element 'U' is the close back vowel. No vowel can be produced beyond this position, the end. The third element 'M' is a bi-labial, nasal voiced consonant. There is no sound beyond the bi-labial sound, no sound beyond the nasal cavity—that is the *akasha*.

Of all the sounds produced through striking (*ahat*) A U M represents the boundaries. The only sound that is beyond the realm of A U M is (*anahat*) -- those sounds which are produced without striking, the celestial sounds. Thus A U M to me signified all *shabda* — learning or wisdom, etc. Therefore, my *mantra* begins not only with the word 'Om'; it begins with a feeling.

You can construct your own *mantra*. There is nothing sacrosanct about it. It does not have to be in Sanskrit. You can communicate with your *Ishta* in whatever language you like. All that is essential is that along with the message your feelings should also be conveyed.

But how would you know that the *mantra* you have chosen or formed is your *mantra*? If it establishes communication, the *mantra* is designed for you; it is your *mantra*. Now, what is the first step in communication? You have to make your position known. And how do you make your position known? By giving a call. Have you ever heard an amateur radio operation? The first thing done is to get on the band and give a general call — CQ...CQ...CQ. Or, if you want a particular station you name it. If a station picks up your

signal it will call you back. A communication is established.

The same procedure is to be followed here. Give a call to the station you have already identified. I used 'Om...' 'Om...' 'Om...'. When I felt a station responding, I recognized it. It was a form I loved. It was my *Ishta*. It may take you months before you feel the presence of the station on your wave-length, but do not stop calling. Once you start getting the signal, however faint, persist with it till you get it clear. And then start communicating. Even now I have to call a few times before any communication begins, even though our frequency is already decided (i.e., the *japa mantra* is already agreed upon).

What call-sign you want to choose is your discretion; the message is to be conveyed is again your choice. I have told you mine. Formulate a call and a message for yourself also. It is something when you get back home, and give a call, something like '*Sunno—sun rahi ho?*' Maybe you repeat it a few times. And when you feel the presence of your wife in some part of the house you become particular and say '*Sunno, Rashmi...*', and the message begins. Therefore, the form of address plus the name plus the message — and that is the *mantra* for you.

Yoga will be meaningful for only those who have faith in three things. Firstly, one must believe that there is *Ishwar* — call him by any name you like. Yoga has no meaning for an atheist. One may believe in *asanas*, but that is no Yoga. Secondly, one must believe that there is divinity in man. Man is not a sinner thrown out of Eden. Man is not living just to atone for that original sin. Human life is meant for some higher purpose. Finally, one must believe that the divinity in man impels him to be one with the Divine — the *Ishwar*; a part meeting the whole means merging with the Divine. Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit verb, *Yuj* — to join, to add upto. One cannot believe in the process or the means alone till one also believes in the raw material and the finished product. Therefore, Yoga is for those who want to accelerate this process, for those who

want to merge with their creator. That is eternal bliss — *anand*.

Well, what is this path? How does one know that it is right? How does a young tortoise, just out of the egg, know the path to water — his destination? His instinct, of course. Every tortoise is programmed to find his way to water, without anyone guiding him. In the same way, each one of us is programmed to find our path to our destination. Some find it early, and some find it very close to their death, when it is too late. But all of us find it. Those who make an effort to find, and those who seek, find it.

It is like finding a door in a dark room. Those who go round and round in the room in a haphazard fashion will never find it but those who begin systematically along the wall cannot miss the door. It is a different matter that someone may begin the search with the stretched hand and there is the door; some may travel the room halfway and get to the door; and still there could be some others who begin the search just when they have passed the door but they would also find the door after one complete round.

I have been one of those lucky ones who saw light through a slit in the door. I knew the door was there. All I had to do was either to wait there for the door to open or make an effort to pull it open. I chose the latter course of action.

Therefore, each one of us has his own path. Maybe there are many who have the same path destined (or programmed) for them. Since we all make our separate efforts, there is no way to find what others are doing. What sustains me in this is my faith, my instinct and my will to continue till I arrive at my destination like the young tortoise crawling towards the sea.

As I said earlier, Yoga is for those who believe in three things; likewise, I would mention three blind alleys. First, there is philosophy which people seek to support their form of Yoga. They, at best, know something about Yoga but very little Yoga. After my release from prison, I also looked for Yoga literature, read over a hundred

books from Zen and Tibetan meditation to Arthur Avalon, from Rajneesh to Vivekanand and from Krishnamurthy to Muktananda. I found myself more confused.

My search for a philosophy took me away from my own daily Yoga. I wish I had not read that literature and wasted my time and energy. At the end of this period I realised that I did not need a philosophy to make my form of Yoga sound respectable. Those who have to prove to others that their form of Yoga is the best go around building an impressive philosophical camouflage for their wares. They are interested more in selling the product rather than in the product itself.

Second, there is the *guru* syndrome. There is no *guru* in the world who can even remotely sense what you are programmed for. Nobody can analyse your chip. You are the best judge for yourself; like I found for myself that *bhakti* Yoga was the best suited to me. I was not comfortable with other known forms. But it has been a long process. No guru will do it for you. Let me put it differently; gurus are like drapers, churning out just one-size suits; if it happens to be your size you are lucky, or else you are stuck with a suit a size too small or too large for the rest of your life. Therefore, you already have your size; just have faith in it and you will know.

The third blind alley is camps. Yoga camps are a craze these days. The sum total of all camps is an attempt to put different people, with different *sanskaras*, with different *karmic* level into a strait jacket. It can be great fun—one big *mela* — but it cannot be a search for your path. You have to search your path on your own. Nobody can help you. The best time to search for your path is when you are alone, when you are all by yourself. You will make a correct decision only when there is no inducement of any kind. Camps are a very subtle form of inducement. Stop rushing for an advertised product. You don't need any. You have your own programme within you. Just sit down calmly and you would know. If you really want to find your way, you can. The tortoise instinct is infallible.

The stillness within

SWAMI MUKTANANDA

IN the *Upanishads* there is a question: 'What do human beings want?' The answer is that we want happiness. Everything we do, we do for the sake of happiness. We seek that happiness through our work, through our friends and family, through art and science, through food, drink, and entertainment. For happiness, we perform all the activities of daily life, and this is why we keep expanding our material world.

Inside us lies divine happiness, the same happiness we are looking for in the world. If we think about the joy we derive from different activities, we will realise that we experience happiness not in the activities, but within ourselves. For example, when you look at a beautiful picture, where do you feel pleasure, in the picture or in yourself? When you eat a delicious meal, do you experience satisfaction in the food or in yourself? When you meet a friend and feel joy, is that joy in your friend or in yourself? The truth is that the joy you find in all these things is simply a reflection of the joy of your own inner Self.

The testimony for this is our sleep. At the end of every day, no matter how much we have eaten or

drunk or earned or enjoyed, we are exhausted. All we want to do is to go into our bedroom, turn off the light, and take refuge in a blanket. During sleep, we are completely alone. We do not want our wife, our husband, our friends, our possessions. We do not eat anything, we do not earn anything, we do not enjoy anything. Yet, while we are sleeping, the weariness of our waking hours is removed independently, by the strength of our own spirit. In the morning, when we wake up, we feel completely rested.

This is an experience that we have every day. If we think carefully about why we become exhausted everything we do during the day and why we get so much peace from sleep, we will understand that the real source of our contentment is not eating or drinking or anything outside ourselves, but is within. During the day, the mind turns outward. However, in the sleep state, the mind takes some rest in the Self, and it is this which removes our fatigue. Absorbed in the little bliss of sleep, we forget the pains of the working state. If we were to go

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just beyond sleep and enter into the state of meditation, we would be able to drink the nectar of love and happiness which lies in the heart. ...

There are many techniques which are supposed to lead us to God, but, of all these, meditation is the one recognised by all the saints and sages because only in meditation can we see the inner Self directly. That which lives in the heart cannot be found in books. If we look for it in churches and temples, we cannot find it. Logical reasoning and the ability to give great lectures are of no use either. Since that being is our innermost consciousness, it is necessary for us to turn within to have a direct experience of it.

There was a time when I was addicted to reading the scriptures. One day I went to see my Guru with a book under my arm. He said, 'Muktananda, come here. What is that?'

'It's an *Upanishad*,' I replied.

'Do you know how this book was made?' he asked me. 'It was made by a brain. The brain may make any number of books, but a book cannot make a brain. You had better throw it away and meditate ...'

The *Upanishads* say that everything in the universe is in meditation. The earth is held in position by meditation, fire burns through the power of meditation, water flows through the power of meditation, and the wind blows through the power of meditation. Through meditation, the ancient sages discovered the various laws of society and how to govern so that everything functioned smoothly. In the same way, the secrets of the ancient sciences were revealed to these sages. Through meditation, they accomplished great tasks.

Meditation is universal. It is not the property of any particular sect or cult. It does not belong to the East or to the West, nor does it belong to Hinduism, Buddhism, or Sufism. Meditation is everyone's property; just as sleep is everyone's property; it belongs to humanity. Meditation is not something difficult or strange. All of us, in our daily

lives, are already familiar with it. Without meditation, a doctor could not diagnose a disease, nor a student pass an examination. All our arts and skills, from driving a car to cooking a meal to painting a picture to solving a mathematical problem, are perfected through the power of concentration, which is nothing but meditation. However, these are external forms of meditation. When we turn our attention within and focus on our inner being, just as we focus on external objects, we are meditating on the Self ...

Contemporary scientists are becoming aware that the basis of the universe is energy. They are discovering what the ancient sages of India have known for millennia: that it is consciousness which forms the ground, or canvas, on which the material universe is drawn. In fact, the entire world is the play of this energy. Within its own being, by its own free will, it manifests this universe of diversities and becomes all the forms and shapes we see around us. This energy pervades every particle of the universe, from the supreme principle to the tiniest insect, and performs infinite functions. Yet, even though it becomes the world, this consciousness remains untouched and free of stain.

Just as this energy pervades the universe, it permeates the human body, filling it from head to toe. It is this *shakti* which carries on all our life functions. It becomes the *prana* and *apana*, the incoming and outgoing breaths. It is the power which makes our heart beat and which causes the blood to flow in our veins. In this way, this conscious energy powers our bodies.

However, in its inner spiritual aspect, the energy ordinarily lies dormant. The awakening of this latent inner energy is essential for all of us, because only when it is activated and unfolds within us are we truly able to experience the Self. According to the yogic scriptures, this inner *Kundalini Shakti* resides at a subtle energy centre known as the *muladhara chakra*, located at the base of the spine. The awakening of this energy is the beginning of a subtle inner process which leads us

ultimately to the state of union with the Self.

There are several ways in which this awakening can take place. However, the easiest is through *shaktipat*, the transmission of energy from a fully Self-realised spiritual master. In *shaktipat*, one's inner energy is kindled by the fully unfolded energy of the Guru, just as a lit candle lights an unlit one. Then, one no longer has to make an effort to meditate. Meditation comes spontaneously on its own ...

The first question which arises when we sit for meditation is, 'On what should we meditate?' People meditate on all kinds of objects and recommend many different techniques. Maharishi Patanjali speaks of concentration, or *dharana*, in which one focuses one's attention on a participate object in order to still and focus the mind. One can also focus on a being who has risen above passion and attachment, and as the mind clings to such a being, it will take on his qualities. In fact, Patanjali says that one may concentrate wherever the mind finds satisfaction.

However, the best object of meditation is the inner Self. When the Self is the goal of meditation, why should we choose another object? If we want to experience the Self, we should meditate on the Self. If we want to know God, we should meditate on God. The mind becomes like that on which it meditates....

The highest meditation is the state of complete inner stillness. In that state, not a single thought arises in the mind. However, most people cannot attain this state of stillness right away. For that reason, it is of the greatest importance for a meditator to understand how to deal with the mind.

Most people who meditate make the same mistake. When they sit for meditation, they do not focus on the Self. Instead, they run after the mind, trying to find out what it is doing? People always complain to me, 'When I try to meditate, different thoughts keep rushing into my mind.' Sometimes their minds are filled with anger, sometimes with hatred, sometimes with lust. At one

moment, they are thinking of someone they love; at another moment, they are remembering their past bad actions and are filled with remorse. The more they try to obliterate thoughts from the mind, the more thoughts rush in. Instead of meditating on the Self, they find themselves meditating on the thoughts of the mind, like the seeker who found himself meditating on a monkey.

Once there was a seeker who went to a Guru to learn meditation. The Guru said, 'I will choose an auspicious time for your initiation, and then I will call you.' When the auspicious hour came, the Guru called the seeker and made all the proper arrangements for the initiation. After he had completed all the parts of the ritual, he said, 'I am going to give you an important instruction. When you sit for meditation, first bow in all four directions and begin to repeat your mantra. But remember one thing. Whatever you do, don't think of a monkey.'

'Why on earth would I think of a monkey?' asked the disciple. 'I never thought of a monkey in my life. I don't care about monkeys; I care only about God.'

When the initiation was over, the young man returned home, spread out a mat, and sat on it, facing East. He took a sip of holy water and bowed in all four directions, and then he began to think about his Guru's last instruction. 'What was it my Guru said? Oh, yes, "Don't think of a monkey".' Immediately a monkey appeared in his mind.

The seeker was upset. 'Where did that monkey come from?' he wondered. He opened his eyes and took another sip of holy water. Again, he recalled what his Guru had said: 'Don't think of a monkey.' Once again, a monkey stood before him.

The seeker made three, four, five more attempts to meditate and each time was confronted with the monkey. Finally, he rushed back to his Guru. 'O Guru, O holy seer, what shall I do? Until I came to you I didn't know what a monkey looked like, and now, when I sit for

meditation, a monkey is all I can see.'

This is what happens when we try to subdue the mind forcibly in meditation. Instead of worrying about the thoughts in the mind, instead of trying to erase the thoughts from the mind, it would be much better if we tried to understand the nature of the mind. What is the mind? The mind has no independent existence. The *Upanishads* say that the Self has itself become the mind. The mind is nothing but a contracted form of the supreme consciousness which has created the universe. The *Pratyabhijnahridayam* explains this is an aphorism: *Chitireva chetana padaadavarudhaa chetya sankochini chittam*. This means that, when consciousness descends from its status as pure consciousness and assumes limitations, it becomes the stuff of the mind.

This is easy to understand if we think about what actually comprises the thoughts and images of the mind. The horse, the dog, and the camel which arise in the mind are not made of anything material; they are made of consciousness. The aphorism says that the mind-stuff which forms itself into a camel, a dog, or a horse is nothing but a pulsation of the same universal consciousness which has formed the universe. Another aphorism in the *Pratyabhijnahridayam* is *Svecchayaa svabhittau vishvam unmeelayati*, which means that consciousness, that universal energy, has created the universe of its own being.

In the same way, when consciousness becomes the mind by assuming limitations, it begins to create endless mental universes. There are many outer universes, but they are all contained in consciousness. In the same way, the universes which vibrate in the mind should not be seen as different from consciousness. If you can look at your mind in this way, you will have very good meditation. Let your mind spin as much as it wants to; do not try to subdue it. Simply witness the different thoughts as they arise and subside. No matter what thoughts and images arise in the mind, be aware that there is no concrete material from which they are being manifested. They are simply a

phantasmagoria of consciousness, and, no matter how many worlds of desires, wishes, and positive and negative thoughts your mind creates, you should realise that they are all a play of consciousness.

When thoughts or images arise in your meditation, maintain the awareness of equality—the understanding that all objects are nothing but different forms of the Self. Be aware that even the worst thought is God. This understanding is vital to meditation. Your goal is not to battle with the mind, but to witness the mind. Know that you are the witness, the Self, and let the mind go wherever it likes. If you meditate with this awareness—whatever is, is God—your mind will become calm very soon, and that will be high meditation.

Another great means of dealing with the mind is to take the support of the mantra. In India there is a saying that the best way to take a thorn out of one's foot is with another thorn. In the same way, according to the meditation scriptures, when one wants to still the mind, which revels in thoughts, one takes the help of one thought, the mantra. ...

It is very important to repeat the mantra with the understanding of its meaning. Moreover, one who wants to attain the power of mantra, who wants to merge in mantra, should have the awareness that the goal of the mantra is one's own Self and that there is no difference between oneself, the mantra, and the goal of the mantra. If we hear an abuse word, we immediately identify ourselves as the object of that word, and that is why it has such an effect on us. If we repeat the mantra understanding that we are the object of the mantra, should not the mantra affect us as strongly as an abusive term? ...

Another important factor in meditation is the sitting posture, or *asana*. The sitting posture is the foundation on which the whole structure of yoga rests. The *Yoga Sutras* say that the correct sitting posture is that in which one can sit comfortably for a long time. For meditation, the most important

thing, in *asana* is that the spine be kept straight. If the back is kept straight, the mind becomes steady in the heart.

The final factor in meditation is *pranayama*, the breathing process. People practise many different kinds of *pranayama*. Some people practise it so much that they ruin their minds, their intellects, and their bodies. In meditation the breathing process should be natural and spontaneous. We should not try to disturb the natural rhythm of the breath.

The mind and the *prana* work in conjunction with each other. So let the rhythm of your breathing be natural. As you repeat the mantra, the breath will go in and out in time with the rhythm of the mantra and will become steady by itself.

With great subtlety, listen to the sound of the breath as it comes in and goes out. As the breath comes in, it makes the sound *ham*. As it goes out, it makes the sound *so*. *So'ham* is the natural mantra. It means 'I am That', and it repeats itself spontaneously with every breath. Become aware of the breath sound. As you inhale, *ham*. As you exhale, *so*. Perceive the space where *ham* merges inside, before *so* arises. Perceive the space where *so* merges outside, before *ham* has arisen. This space of stillness, the space between the breaths, is the space of the Self. Focus subtly on the space between the breaths, and you will very naturally experience the Self.

Lose yourself in meditation. No matter what feeling arises, let it be. Do not fear. The inner energy is filled with infinite techniques, processes, and feelings. Its play is in everything. Therefore, everything belongs to it, and it is one with your Self.

The purpose of meditation is inner happiness, inner peace. It is fine to have visions, but they are not absolutely necessary. What is necessary is inner joy. When all the senses become quiet and you experience bliss, that is the attainment. The world is the embodiment of joy; joy lies everywhere. Find it and attain it.

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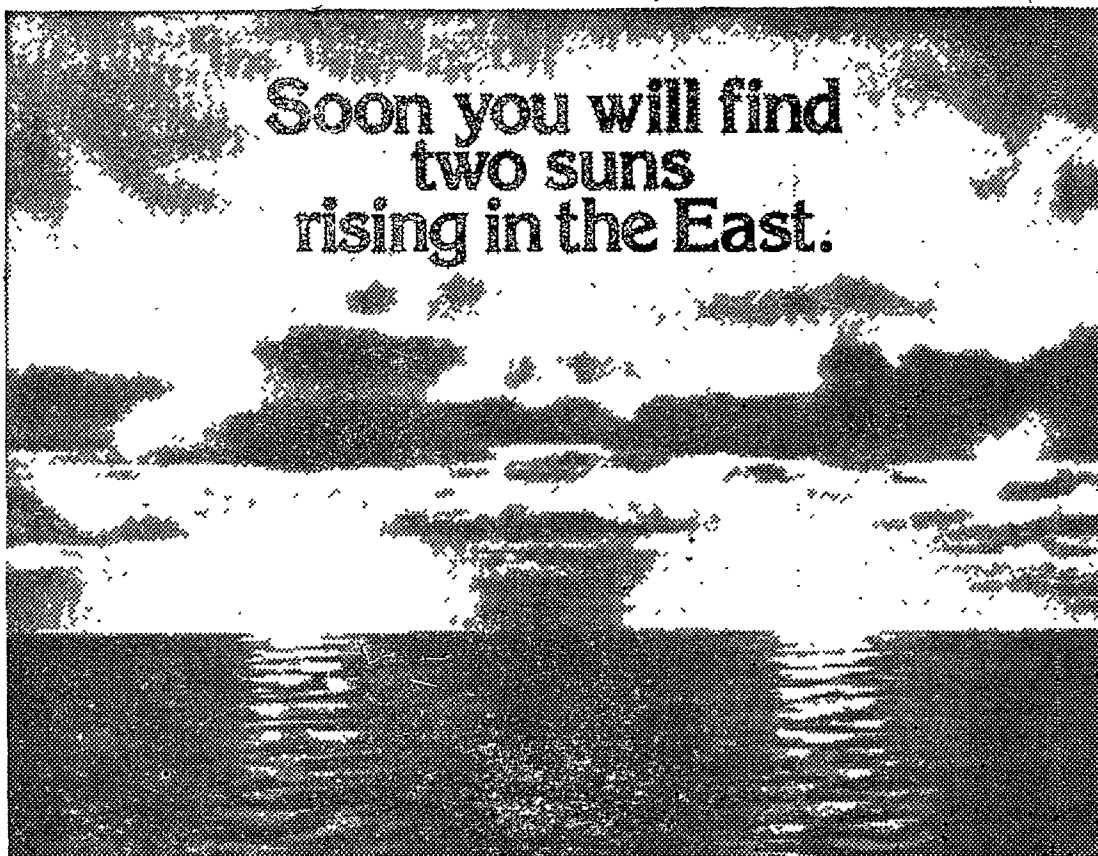
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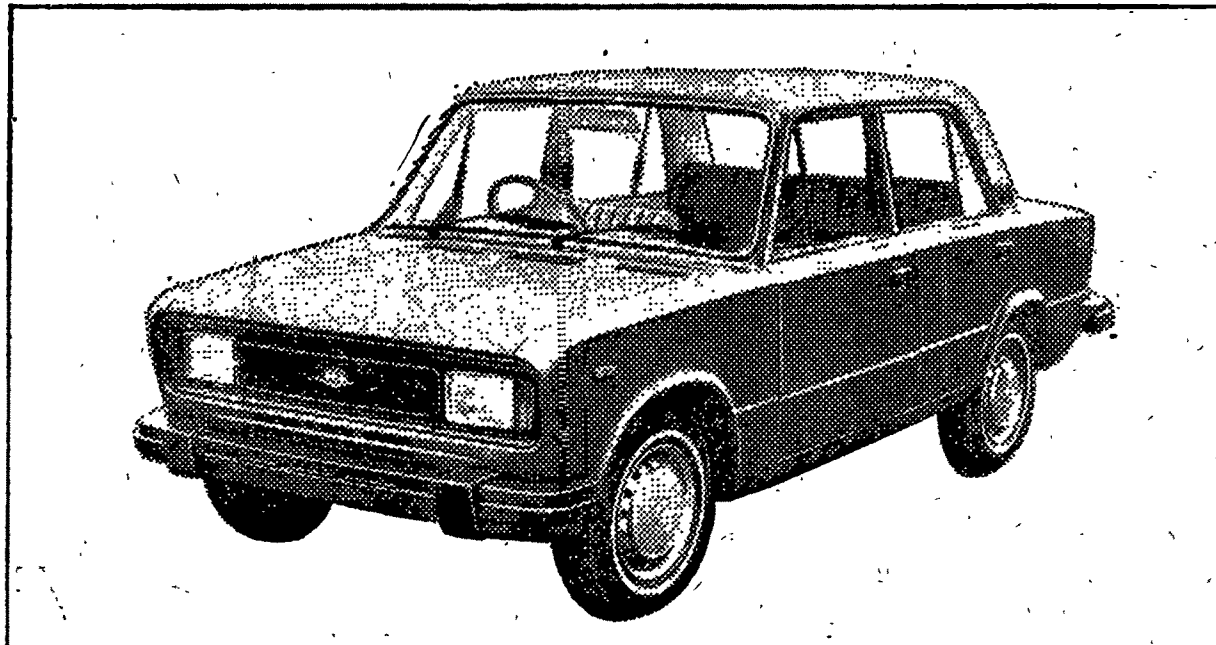
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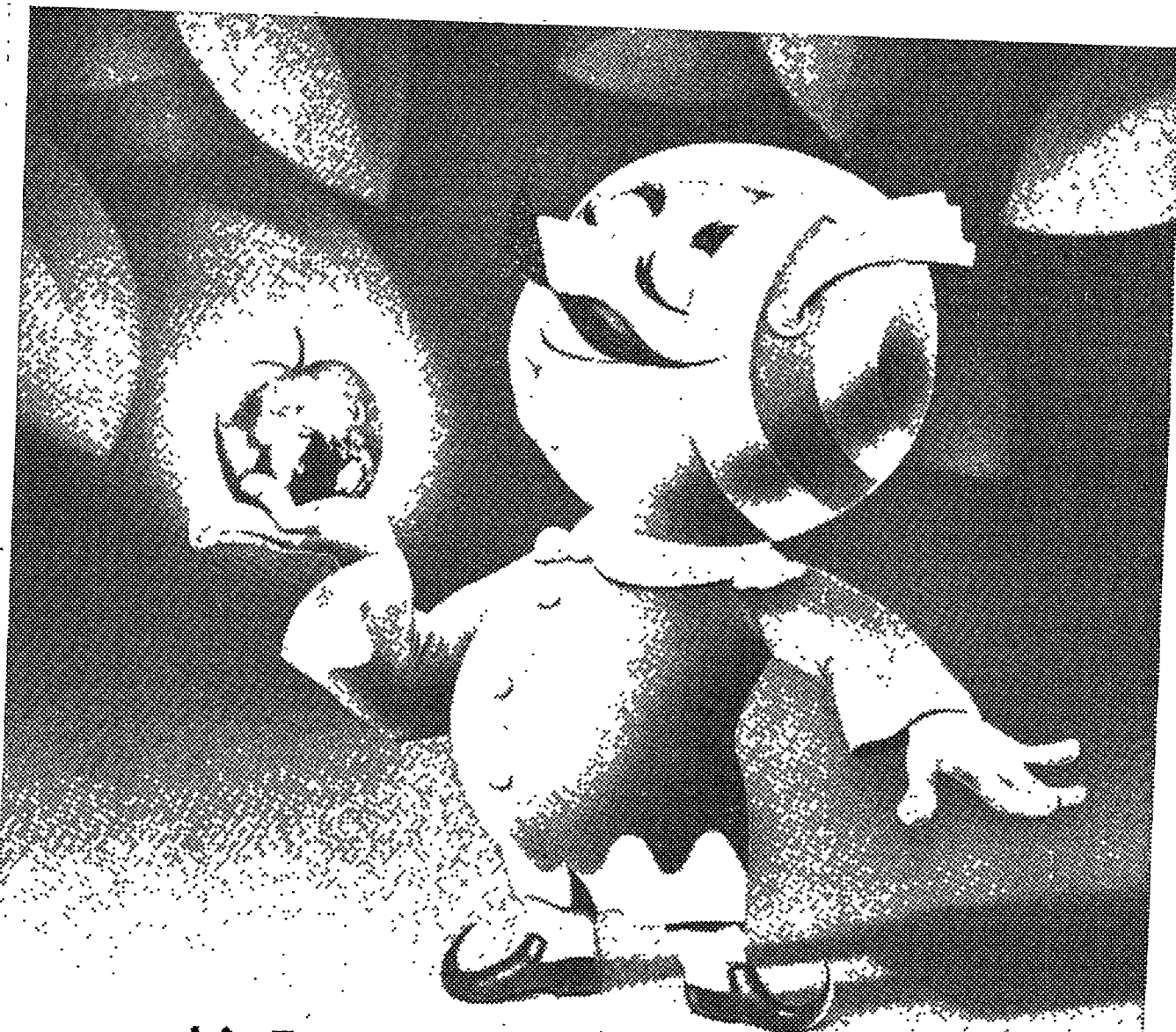
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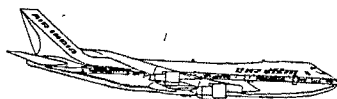
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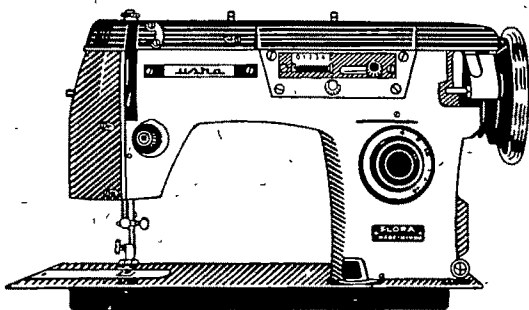
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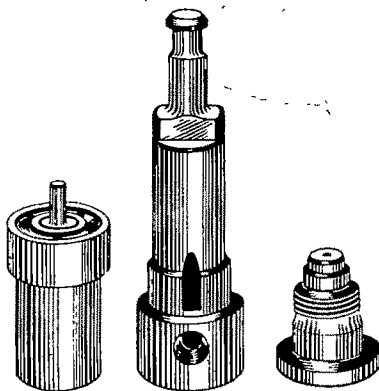
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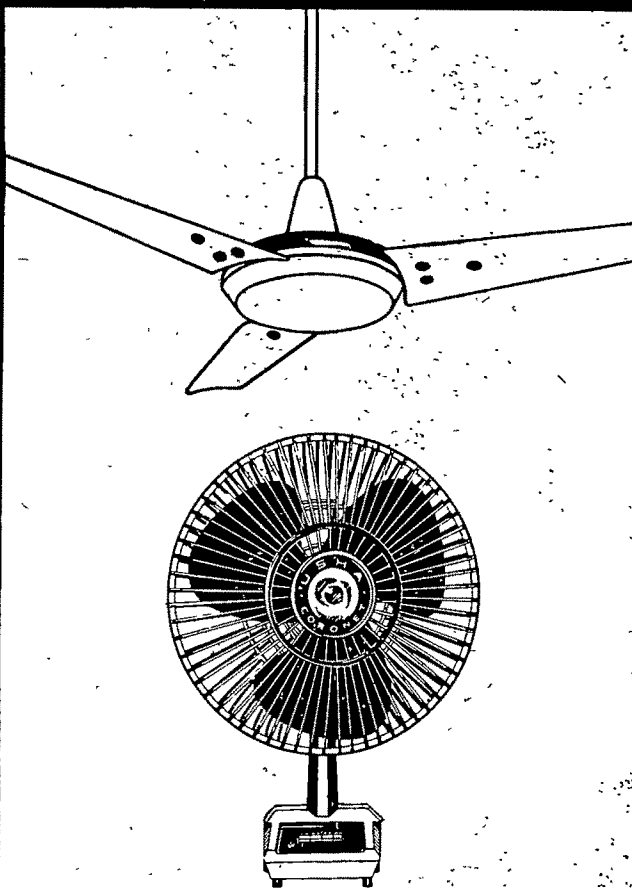
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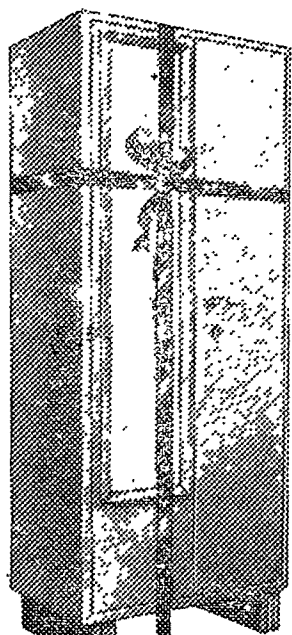


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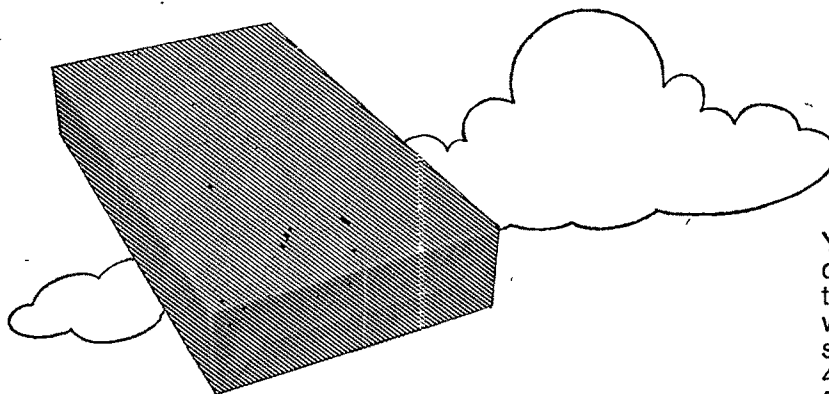
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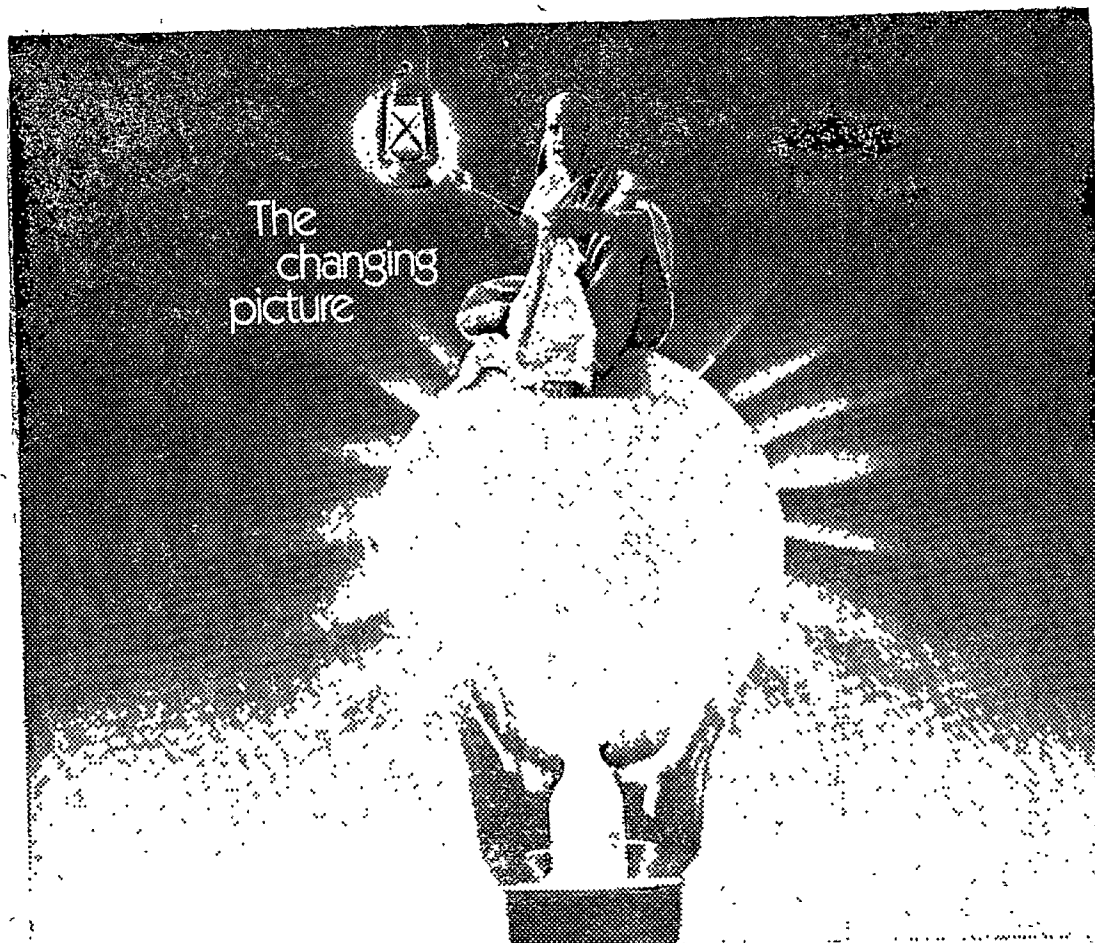


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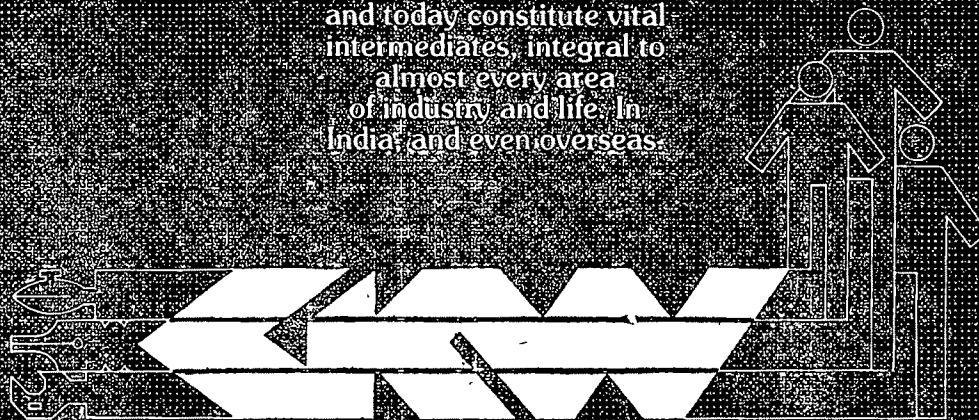
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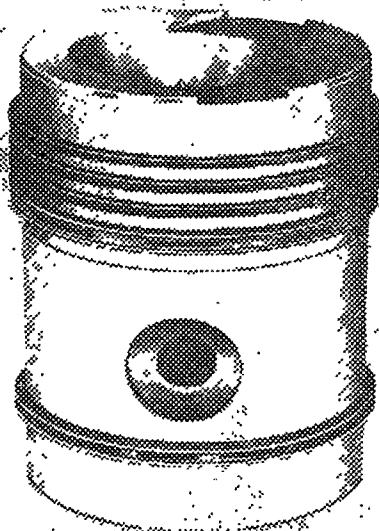
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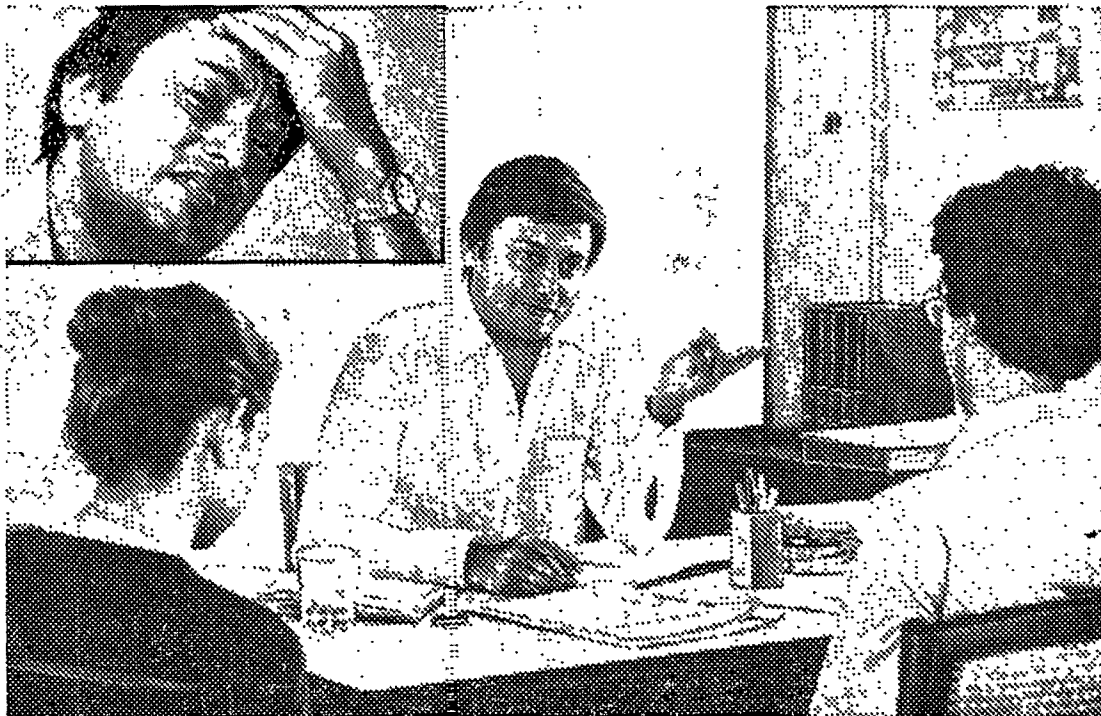


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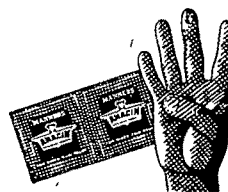
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NEXT MONTH : THE HINDUS

312

ARCHITECTURAL POLLUTION

a symposium

on our

damaged city scapes

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

posed by Romesh Thapar,
Editor, 'Seminar'

FLUSHING DOWN OUR URBAN FUTURE

Romi Khosla, architect, Managing Editor
of the 'Journal of Arts and Ideas'

DELHI IN THE YEAR 2000

A.G. Krishna Menon, architect

A CITY WITHIN THE CITY

Gautam Bhatia, architect based in Delhi

A SELF-SUSTAINING APPROACH

Aditya Prakash, architect and town planner,
was Principal of the School of Architecture
in Chandigarh

SEARCH FOR ROOTS

Satish Gujral, painter, sculptor
and architect

AGAINST PROFESSIONALISM

Ramesh Manandhar, Action Research
Centre, Kathmandu

BOOKS

Reviewed by Gautam Bhatia and Ashish Ganju

FURTHER READING

A select and relevant bibliography
compiled by Devendra Kumar

COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury of
Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

FOR some time now, the more sensitive have viewed with alarm the extraordinary deterioration in the environment, particularly the human habitats. The global scale of the crisis was sought to be covered over by the mumbo-jumbo of architectural writing which acclaimed the 'thrust' of the 'defiant' skyscrapers, symbols of the confidence of our age, the box-like structures luxuriating in the newly-discovered 'aesthetics' inherent in geometrical forms, and the technologies spawned by a marriage of steel-cum-concrete giving 'form' a 'freedom' it never enjoyed before. We were silent, frightened to be dismissed as traditional, stick-in-the-mud characters, even though some of us knew that this debate was irrelevant in so many parts of the world, particularly the rural.

The silence was unbroken even as this architectural pollution despoiled the earth, made every urban habitat look like the other, ridiculed the notion of integral continuities which reflect the varying spirit of the peoples of this world of ours, and made nonsense of the relationships between humans and their structures of work and living. It

was only when it was realised that the determinant factor in 'modern' architecture was the shadowy cost accountant that the silence was broken. A challenge began to build.

The high-rise monstrosities were denounced as factors in human despair and alienation. Space was demanded, and 'spatial planning' became a matter to be considered. Old systems of work and living, tested over the centuries in varying climates and temperatures, were studied to find the answers for today's problems. The challenges of building the homes, the offices and the work places of today were more precisely defined, as also the materials. We opened our minds to the possibility that steel and concrete in so many areas could be replaced by local material, even by baked earth, or carefully prepared mud. And we discovered that it was still possible to build cheaply and effectively. New architectural vibrations took over. But the battle is only joined tentatively, marginally, experimentally. The polluters have yet to be demolished.

The other day, the impatience of the people was

captured by Charles, Prince of Wales, when he delivered a commemoration address to the Royal Institute of British Architects on its 150th anniversary. Some extracts are worth recalling.

For far too long, it seems to me, some planners and architects have consistently ignored the feelings and wishes of the mass of ordinary people in this country. Perhaps, when you think about it, it is hardly surprising as architects tend to have been trained to design buildings from scratch—to tear down and rebuild. Except in Interior Design courses, students are not taught to rehabilitate, nor do they ever meet the ultimate users of buildings in their training—indeed, they can often go through their whole career without doing so. Consequently, a large number of us have developed a feeling that architects tend to design houses for the approval of fellow architects and critics, not for the tenants:

To be concerned about the way people live: about the environment they inhabit and the kind of community that is created by that environ-

ment should surely be one of the prime requirements of a really good architect. It has been most encouraging to see the development of community architecture as a natural reaction to the policy of decamping people to new towns and overspill estates where the extended family patterns of support were destroyed and the community life was lost. Now, moreover, we are seeing the gradual expansion of housing co-operatives, particularly in the inner city areas of Liverpool, where the tenants are able to work with an architect of their own who listens to their comments and their ideas and tries to design the kind of environment they want, rather than the kind which tends to be imposed upon them without any degree of choice.

Enabling the client community to be involved in the detailed process of design rather than exclusively the local authority, is I am sure the kind of development we should be examining more closely. Apart from anything else, there is an assumption that if people have played a part in creating something they might conceivably treat

it as their own possession and look after it, thus making an attempt at reducing the problem of vandalism. What I believe is important about community architecture is that it has shown 'ordinary' people that their views are worth having; that architects and planners do not necessarily have the monopoly of knowing best about taste, style and planning, that they need not be made to feel guilty or ignorant if their natural preference is for the more 'traditional' designs — for a small garden, for courtyards, arches and porches — and that there is a growing number of architects prepared to listen and to offer imaginative ideas.

On that note I can't help thinking how much more worthwhile it would be if a community approach could have been used in the Mansion House Square project. It would be a tragedy if the character and skyline of our capital city were to be further ruined and St. Paul's dwarfed by yet another giant glass stump, better suited to down town Chicago than the City of London. It is hard to imagine that London before the last war must have had one of the most beautiful skyline of any great city, if those who recall it are to be believed. Those who do say that the affinity between buildings and the earth, in spite of the city's immense size, was so close and organic that the houses looked almost as though they had grown out of the earth and had not been imposed upon it — grown moreover, in such a way that as few trees as possible were thrust out of the way.

Those who knew it then and loved it, as so many British love Venice without concrete stumps and glass towers, and those who can imagine what it was like must associate with the sentiments in one of Aldous Huxley's earliest and most successful novels, *Antic Hay*, where the main character, an unsuccessful architect, reveals a model of London as Christopher Wren wanted to rebuild it after the Great Fire and describes how Wren was so obsessed with the opportunity the fire gave the city to rebuild itself into a greater and more glorious vision.

What, then, are we doing to our capital city now? What have we done to it since the bombing during the war? What are we shortly going to do to one of its most famous areas — Trafalgar Square? Instead of designing an extension to the elegant facade of the National Gallery which complements it and continues the concepts of columns and domes, it looks as if we may be presented with a kind of vast municipal fire station, complete with the sort of tower that contains the siren. I would understand better this type of High Tech approach if you demolished the whole of Trafalgar Square and started again with a single architect responsible for the entire layout, but what is proposed is like a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much loved and elegant friend.

Apart from anything else, it defeats me why anyone wishing to display the early Renaissance pictures belonging to the gallery should do so in a new gallery so manifestly at odds with the whole spirit of that age of astonishing proportion. Why can't we have those curves and arches that express feeling in design? What is wrong with them? Why has everything got to be vertical, straight, unbending, only at right angles — and functional? As if the National Gallery extension wasn't enough, they are now apparently planning to redevelop the large, oval-belled 19th century building, known as the Grand Hotel, which stands on the south west corner of Trafalgar Square and which was saved from demolition in 1974 after a campaign to rescue it. As with the National Gallery, I believe, the plan is to put this redevelopment out to competition, in which case we can only criticize the judges and not the architects for I suspect there will be some entries representative of the present day school of Romantic Pragmatism, which could at least provide an alternative. Goethe once said 'there is nothing more dreadful than imagination without taste.' In this 150th anniversary year, which provides an opportunity for a fresh look at the path ahead ... may I express the earnest hope that the next 151 years will see a new harmony between imagination and taste, and in the relationship between the architects and the people of this country.

Prince Charles is concerned with architecture, or architectural pollution, in England, but what he has to say has immediate relevance to architecture everywhere, including India. We are caught in the pincers of two horrendous trends. One is to pursue the colonial coolie-lines type of PWD architecture for housing the people, and the other is to build gigantically and wastefully in imitation of the decadent West — inefficiently, too, because everything is in short supply here, including water and electricity. This imitative activity of our architects, or those who are able to grab the contracts, and their total lack of concern for the environment, is now 'sculpted' in all our major cities, even 'beauty spots'. At meetings which voice concern over these developments, they are silent observers having already committed themselves further to the rape of the landscape.

The time has come to cry halt to this architectural pollution and to expose the artistic and aesthetic pretensions of those who sponsor the 'theories' which permit this pollution. Even as this battle is being joined, the politicians who prosper on these speculations will have to be disciplined by genuinely autonomous authorities established to reduce the architectural pollution, to find Indian answers to Indian problems. It covers building programmes, the growth of cities, out-dated rules and regulations and the proper relationship between urban sprawls and their hinterland. The challenge is awesome. We will soon be a nation of 1000 millions. Let's not forget it.

ROMESH THAPAR

Flushing down our urban future

ROMI KHOSLA

IT is growing increasingly difficult to embrace most contemporary buildings with any love. Something certainly seems to have gone wrong. It is also getting more and more difficult for architects to avoid questions which demand answers for the growing ugliness of our cities. This ugliness is caused by unpleasant buildings on one side and a general deterioration of the urban environment, on the other. At the risk of joining the class of professional moaners and groaners about general conditions in India ('why can't they learn a thing or two from abroad') one cannot but dread the growing deterioration of the quality of urban life in our cities.

Our architects and planners too are hiding behind that nebulous mist of the 'growing population, what can we do' excuse. This is a false excuse. The real reason is that we have not had the vision to plan at the scale that India demands. This vision cannot be constrained by the poverty of resources; on the contrary, the challenge is to have the vision and generate the resources to realise it.

Our architects, like most intellectuals, are so demoralised with pragmatic approaches to problems that give tangible results quickly, that they too have begun more and more

to be solely concerned about just managing the present. Their own professional problems and ambitions have consumed their entire energies and they have lost faith in the future of our country. Indeed, the responsibility for visualising a future for our country has been usurped by the legislators who have to rely more and more on the law to prevent the tremendous energies of our people from engulfing our cities and reducing them to slums.

The overwhelming desire amongst our architects to flush down the future of our country must be resisted. The failure of the concrete box must be exposed. We cannot let our planners doom our future cities to the sewers. We simply must attack the easy pessimism which is emerging from within a profession that seems to be snug within its own prosperity. Struggle and complexity in the realm of ideas is an essential pre-requisite to the debates about our future and there is very little evidence of these debates which probably explains the poverty of ideas.

The attack on pessimism has to be launched on two fronts at the same time. At one level there are the questions about the aesthetics of architecture which seriously doubt the kind of buildings that are being put up today, the way they look

and their relevance to our country. The second front is a broader one which questions the way in which the process of urbanisation has been abandoned to the rural migrant while resources are increasingly being diverted to protect the middle class from the onslaught of the urban poor (demolitions and resettlement colonies).

At the aesthetic level, the crucial question that has to be tackled is that of Modernism. For many years, in the West, the notion of 'Modern Architecture' was clear. It had emerged first at the level of ideas within the artists and architects who had waged a war against the declining décorativeness of the late 19th century paintings and buildings within Europe. In the field of architecture, the ideas about Modernism had been forged by groups in Italy (Futurists), Holland (De Stijl), Germany (Bauhaus), Soviet Union (O.S.A.) and other smaller groups on the fringe. These major ones were able to attain a positive leap in their ideas about aesthetics for the future and their members have been responsible in guiding the ideas of modern architecture till today.

While their ideas were being formed, the revolution in Russia exploded in their midst and many of these ideas were tried out and built by the new Communist Government. For the European architects who were involved in these groups, the Soviet Union became a Mecca and Le Corbusier went there regularly to give practical shape to his ideas. The Soviet experience had, so to speak, vindicated their ideals in real life.

This climate, however, lasted only a few years and when the Soviet Union itself began to reject these modernist notions and opt for more conservative buildings and art, these very architects were driven back to seek patronage in Europe where, unfortunately for them, the growing rise of fascism in Germany and Italy became a threat. Many of them left Europe and took their ideas to America where they were able to survive and modern architecture took root. For those of them who had survived the war in

Europe, the rebuilding of postwar Europe gave ample opportunity.

By the mid 1950s, modern architecture had come to stay in Europe and America and so it was inevitable that in course of time it would come to India. We had only to import one of its champions (Le Corbusier) and the flood gates were opened. The question is whether this 'modern architecture' is relevant to India or not. After all, our own history of architecture has been enriched by Greek, Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and Colonial traditions, so it cannot be that 'Modern Architecture' or the tradition of the so called 'International Style' becomes irrelevant. On the contrary, it has already become another architectural legacy for us.

However, that does not bestow any sanctity on it. The single most important defect in the tradition of 'Modern Architecture' inherited by us is in our assumption that it is giving us a direction for the future of our buildings, because its style does not carry the burden of associations of the past. Thus, those clean concrete boxes (in any case extremely poor versions of western avant-garde architecture) are supposed to dissociate us from our own cultural traditions (which are seen to be messy and over decorative) and take us with a leap into the future.

The basis of this simplistic 'Modern Architecture' is purist abstraction which irons flat all complexity and instead produces buildings that inspire awe but are as hard as flint.¹ One has only to consider the massive high rise buildings covered with mirror glass and steel to understand that these buildings are intended to be abstract objects in space whose presence inspires wonder at the initial beholding but whose poverty of complexity cannot survive in time.

Visual awe and excitement cannot replace emotional enrichment and any architecture that is to be included in the great tradition of the architecture of any culture, must give to the beholder a rich emotional

experience that goes far deeper than the initial visual awe. Those buildings which are in the mainstream of modern architecture and base their forms entirely on geometrical purist abstraction without any specific references to any culture cannot possibly enrich our emotions.

In India, our emotions, even at the subconscious level, are saturated with memories and images that hover above the mundane level. These images are born out of an existence that regards iconography and symbolism, ritual and philosophy as part of our reality that is both magical and real. A scientist at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research can arrive to work with a 'tikka' on his forehead. Within the Indian reality this is not a contradiction because, in each one of us, there are deep associations of a past that are mythical and magical at one level and contemporary at the same time. Different eras born out of different historical times seem to co-exist amongst us simultaneously. It is as if the tribal, feudal and industrial ages live together in some sort of juxtaposition that defies simple explanations.

This kind of an amorphous pluralistic coexistence of different cultures inevitably means that any creative person can simply call upon his personalised life experience to cover a vast range of consciousness which is not available to the European mind. If a European has to draw upon sensations of an era in the early or pre-industrial age, he has to rely on libraries alone to recreate it for him.

Today's European mind has been born out of a monolithic tradition which emerged out of a linear development of its culture which is uniformly Christian in its unmagical reality. The modernism born out of this consciousness is certainly progressive and relevant for the West, but the absorption of this same modernism within the Indian reality needs fundamental transformation before it can relate to our consciousness.

In India it is the portrayal of elemental forces which are all around

1. For a detailed illustrated account of this argument, ref. my article, *Journal of Arts & Ideas*, Volume 7, April-June 1984.

us that are vital in our art and architecture. We cannot confine our architecture to the European concern for surface and form alone. In India, it is the iconography, the vast multitude of images, signs and symbols that have to transform even the best of modern architecture before we can produce buildings that we could embrace with fondness.

The problem with the box-like buildings of modern architecture in India is that they are attempting to liberate their users and beholders through a wholly imported language that relates to the West. Any architecture does, of course, have its own traditions and history and therefore it has its own *language*. The *language* is also often called its vocabulary and consists of the components of a building and how they are assembled together to make the whole. Thus, it is extremely important how windows and doors, roofs and balconies, walls and sun shades or water tanks and entrance gates are conceived by the architect.

When our buildings are conceived entirely within the imported language of the West, we will use straight lines, box like volumes, or geometrical rhythms and flat surfaces to project the image of the building into the future — a future not born out of the past but grafted on and severing itself from the past of India. In adopting this approach, we are grappling with the remnants of the origins of the modern movement inspired by the Soviet Revolution. The problem is that we have not had a social or political revolution here and yet we are busy liberating people through the use of this abstract geometry which is wholly alien to the basis of our own consciousness.

The irony of the whole situation is that in Europe and America the notion of modern architecture has itself been challenged within their own cultures. There is now 'modern', 'late modern' and 'post modern' architecture and that very 'international style' which was the spearhead of the modern movement in architecture is now surely under attack.

There have been major shifts in architecture since roughly 1960,

that have to be distinguished from the coherent body of practice that was known variously as the International Style and Modern Architecture. One cannot use the word 'Modern' for what is happening today if that word is to have any meaning — if it is still to apply to what architects fought for in the twenties. There are not the same beliefs now nor the same styles and sense of space.²

The modern movement, capitalized like all world religions, had its Heroic Period in the twenties and its classy period, its dissemination and commercialisation in the fifties. By the late sixties, it had lost much of its ideological power and, with the death of Le Corbusier in 1965, it had lost much of its moral and spiritual direction.³

Charles Jencks' observation that it was the death of Le Corbusier that finally extinguished the soul of the modern movement is interesting because it was his stay in India that virtually launched a style and philosophy towards architecture that was already beginning to fade in the West. His tremendous energies and the group of Indian disciples that he gathered about him for the Chandigarh project, ensured that his legacy would survive him in this country.

Chandigarh, the hope of Nehru, the symbol of modern India, became the first and only city in India conceived in the modern idiom where form followed function and in one fell swoop the idea of what an urban town should be was wiped out from the subconscious of the Indian architect. There was no attempt whatsoever to understand the basic concepts of Indian urban patterns. Instead the whole lot — the whole Indian urban tradition was thrown out into the garbage tin. Instead of tight pedestrian streets and courtyards and squares for markets and mosques, we got avenues and roads

and a town planned for the administrators and car owners.

We come now to the second battle of ideas that has to be fought. If the first one was about the aesthetics of a degenerate modern movement in architecture, the second one is against the utter lack of our planners in anticipating what sort of cities should be planned for the Indian reality. Here, too, half baked Western notions of town planning have been grafted on to our reality in an attempt to be advanced. In fact, these notions, a mixture of Ebenezer Howard's theories of the garden cities and Le Corbusier's ideas, will lead to a false future for India.

The modern Bauhaus tradition had always advocated that one of the basis of modern design should be the functional separation of elements. The school under Walter Gropius and then Mies van der Rohe (both of whom went to America later), had consistently aimed at an architecture that would emerge out of diagrams of functionality. Thus, in an individual building, staircases, auditorium halls, lift shafts, water tanks — all separate functions were to be expressed separately in the form of the building.

This philosophy of structuring and conceiving of architectural space in a functional manner also spread to the theories of town planning that Le Corbusier had armed himself with when he came to Chandigarh. It was a typical product of a monocultural society which had simplified and rationalised and also separated man from nature. The essence of the idea that man and nature were opposed was, in any case, a completely alien notion to the Indian thought process where integration with nature and the universe were paramount.

In planning for our towns, the pursuit of abstract thought has resulted in underpinning master plans with zones for residential use, government offices, commercial buildings, institutional areas and other functions. These zones have then been separately cast into the city so that its organic quality is wiped out, and it is supposed instead

2. *Late Modern Architecture* by Charles Jencks, Chpt 1., published by Rizzoli International Publications 1980.

3. *Ibid.*, Chpt 2.

to function like a machine with its different parts contributing separately towards some sort of motion. It is the same philosophy that separated the elements of a building.

Towns, too, like buildings, do not function like diagrams and moreover the functional analysis of a town at a given time is valid for a very short time. Which building is used as it is planned to be used for the duration of its life which may be over five decades? There are schools functioning in churches and lathes installed in residential houses — so, which city is behaving the way it was planned to behave. Indeed, there is every evidence that the whole urbanisation process has been abandoned to chance with the municipalities coming in every so often to clean up the cities.

It is extraordinary that the Indian subcontinent, which is amongst the fastest urbanising countries in the world, has no national policy for urbanisation. The entire problem for coping with the urban migration, which is doubling our city sizes every decade, has been left to mediocre planners who sit behind closed doors and decide the fate of our cities on the basis of calculations. Land is divided into plots which get smaller and smaller as the urban population increases. The truth of the matter is that the planners of our metropolitan cities have no clue about what they should do to our cities.

The latest disaster that has emerged before our eyes is the Delhi Master Plan up to the year 2001 which has condemned our capital city to a grim future punctuated with slums without facilities on one side and comfortable middle class colonies on the other.⁴ The reasons for this stagnancy of thought are two-fold: At one level, our municipal planners seem to be plainly ignorant about the theoretical aspects of master planning which are current today: This is due to their own training which taught them the state of the art some

twenty years ago when town planning theory used to concentrate on functional separation of every aspect of the town.

They have confused over-crowding with the malfunctioning of traditional values in our urban life. Hence, crowded areas like the walled city of Delhi or the heartland of Calcutta and Bombay are seen to be wrongly conceived because they mix residential functions with commercial activities. The planners want to draw out all the commercial functions and confine these areas to residential zones. In fact, these areas would function very well if their densities were halved and the population drawn out to areas of similar mixed uses.

A city is an organism and not a machine and planners are constantly forcing it to function like a machine with separate parts conforming to separate functions. This was the thinking about towns over two decades ago and the post war European towns were made lifeless as a result of these theories being applied. Today, currently, planning thought has radically changed but our planners are ignorant of these changes, which concern the need for an interdisciplinary approach towards planning where plans are drawn up in consultation with sociologists, geographers, architects and planners. Yet, the Master Plan of our capital city has been drawn up for execution by just two indifferent planners.

There are fundamental problems which have to be resolved before any plan can be drawn up. These concern commitment at a national level towards issues of urbanisation versus deurbanisation and centralisation versus decentralisation. First and foremost, there is need to resolve this question. Should our cities of the future be de-urbanised colonies, garden cities like New Delhi and Chandigarh or urbanised cities like our traditional walled cities or Jaisalmer. We need to examine whether settlements like New Delhi or Chandigarh are really desirable where we are creating scattered buildings set amidst gardens which are popular for retirement but totally alien to neighbour

proximity, urban culture and vibrant life.

Unfortunately for us, the history of town planning traditions in the West have buried ideological questions and have confined their worries to the geometrical and technical aspects. An ideal town planner today considers himself to be a specialist who refuses to accept any responsibility for fundamental choices which he leaves to his patrons — the politicians. Just as New Delhi was a vastly extended palace for the rulers to live in, so is Chandigarh where Le Corbusier was content to locate the poorest community furthest from the capitol complex.

Both New Delhi and Chandigarh are colonial towns, identical in their layout. New Delhi's hexagonal geometry is only superficially different from the rectangular one of Chandigarh. Both are towns built for the comforts of bureaucrats who administer the nation. It is a mere detail that in the latter case it is Indian bureaucrats and not British ones. Both towns have been inspired by Roman prototypes where geometric grids gave a semblance of order to the habitation. Lutyens and Le Corbusier and our planners today view our traditional towns with mistrust.

The tensions of industrialising towns that polarise the settlement to overcrowded working class areas and underpopulated middle class areas are seen as a threat to the administration. Both Lutyens and Le Corbusier thought it necessary to have straight avenues and grid iron layouts so that administration became simple. The grid iron layout really emerged as an administrative solution to settlements and the colonial rulers extended it from the layout of their cantonments. There is only one idea behind both these town plans and subsequent extensions and this is that it is planning for administration instead of 'for people'.

Lutyens, Le Corbusier, and our municipal planners today use the same vocabulary to define their towns. By vocabulary, I mean the physical features which were born out of a thinking that despises

⁴ For a detailed review of the Master Plan, see my article 'Delhi 2001. The grim implications,' *Times of India*, May 6, 1985.

native culture and mistrusts it for being alien and remote. There has been no attempt whatsoever to understand the basic concepts of Indian urban patterns. Instead, the whole Indian urban tradition has been cast aside.

The first victim of this 'casting aside' exercise was 'urban space' — that tight pedestrian opening that served as a traditional square, born out of the courtyards seen in temple, mosque and market complexes. Instead these planners have given us roads and avenues, streets and pavements. Both, New Delhi and Chandigarh are really 'areas of buildings between roads'.

The second victim was the *haveli* which was a truly urban house, inward looking into the courtyards and enclosed on all three sides with one side opening on to the street. Instead, first the colonial planners, then Le Corbusier and then the DDA or BMDA, all gave us plots to build bungalows which were built up inside and looked outside for view and ventilation. Thus, each bungalow had to be separated from the next by enough space to have gardens and views. Naturally the large plots ensured long avenues and streets. In fact, these anti-urban policies are more valid for a village than an Indian town.

The third victim was the traditional transportation which has been replaced by the primacy of the car. Both New Delhi and Chandigarh have taken the bicycle riding common man and thrown him to the outskirts of the city. The focal point of both cities is the governmental capitol complex.

If the new towns designed by Europeans for the Indians have been such disasters for the common man, what is to be done. The basic contradiction faced by planners and, indeed, the rulers of India is this: how do we approach the question of town planning for the future — build on the old or create a new? If you build on the old, then you have to accept that surgical work has to be carried out by tinkering with the technical defects of existing settlements. But if you build a new then the whole dimension changes.

Then you have to draw up alternative patterns of settlements based on new ideologies which are relevant to the future of India.

The basic question must first be answered 'Do planners exist for people or do people exist for planners?' Uptil now, our experience of British and post-Independence planning has shown us that people exist for planners. Towns do not exist for administrative convenience, nor do they exist for planners. They must exist for people and, once one accepts that, then one has to ask certain fundamental questions about which people.

To my mind, the first and foremost question that town planning has to tackle is — how to abolish the distinction between town and country? This is not a new question; it has been asked many times before and more than one country has failed to find a solution. That however does not mean that there is no solution. A solution has to be found because the differences between urban and rural living must be narrowed down not only at economic and educational levels but also at the town planning levels. If we don't tackle, first of all, this very basic question, all our existing towns will simply be flooded out with the migration from rural areas. Therefore, plan forms have to be evolved which aim at the eventual abolishment of the urban/rural distinction.

Of course, this cannot be done in one day but that must be our goal. There is, it seems to me, only one possible solution to this and that is to accept that a massive urbanisation programme has to be launched that will create new settlements and relieve the pressures on the old towns. These new settlements cannot be like satellite towns, they cannot take the physical shape of concentric feudal towns. They must be *linear*.

The future urban settlements of India must be linear settlements along the corridors of the transportation that link existing old towns. One must be prepared to visualise linear settlements spanning hundreds of miles between towns, so that the traditional concept of a dense built up stain being a town surrounded

by countryside, is replaced by fingers that weave a net through the countryside. Then there will always be proximity to fields, and end to the isolation of the village.

There is nothing new in this idea which Artura Soria Mata had proposed for Madrid in 1880. There has been much debate too. But it remains the only truly democratic plan that allows the technology of fast transport to overcome distance by confining itself to the control corridor instead of spreading like a fungus into every living area of the town.

The second question that planning must take a stand on is the nature of the distinction between the individual and the community. A clear enunciation of this relationship will guide the housing programmes, the transport systems and the provision of all community facilities. This too is not a new problem. But today we are finding out to our terrible cost that the freedom of the individual's choice can sometimes harm the interest of the community. Road systems, car manufacturing capacities and urban space for car parking have shown a bias for the private ownership of the car with little serious effort to improve the quality of mass transit systems and public transport systems at urban and rural levels.

Planning decisions are allowing the individual's choice to be exercised at the expense of the community. We need to ask questions about the future patterns of housing — should they be on individual plots or should we be experimenting with different housing patterns that move the people towards more community based living?

There is indeed a very desperate need to rethink the whole of our ideology of urban living. One must not be trapped by the simple clarity of colonial thinking whose objectives were subjugation and not liberation. We have our urban destiny in our own hands and colonial models cannot provide us with any useful ideas about the future. We have to throw all the old rule books into the rubbish heap and start writing new ones which make sense to the ordinary people in the context of India.

Delhi in the year 2000

A G KRISHNA MENON

IN its broader context, the desecration of our environment begins with the way we plan (or do not plan) our cities. There is need to study the deteriorating urban environment not as a collection of unaesthetic, banal buildings, but as the outcome of the broader social, political and economic process, as a dependent variable within an independent societal system. While the issue can be identified as a global phenomenon, the problem of Third World cities is especially critical.

I use the word 'critical' with caution, because the metaphor of 'crisis' — and consequently the solutions — derives from typically western sensibilities which overlook the necessity, systematically and painstakingly, to uncover and understand the indigenous logic and dynamism of our environmental problems. Compounding the pervasive economic poverty which is contextual to the planning of our environment, are the poverty of ideas and data for analysis.

It is unfortunate, but true, that most of the urban planning carried out not only in Delhi, but indeed all over the Third World, is based on insufficient and faulty data. A further corollary to this depressing fact is that the data that are available are often fitted into obsolete models and non-relevant conceptual frameworks, quite removed from the reality of contemporary society. To

examine why this should be so, we need to know who the planner is, what his background and inherited or acquired value systems are, and what are his tools: the planning methodologies that are commonly accepted and practised.

Who are the moulders of our environment, who cannot see that what they develop and how they develop, contributes to the deterioration of the environment? They are mainly professional planners who have completed a two-year post-graduate course in one of the several prestigious institutions around the country. The majority of the students who opt to study urban planning are generally lower-rung graduates, predominantly architects, or deputed candidates from government planning departments, already inured to the planning process practised by the government, which they expect to rejoin after their course of studies.

The courses themselves, and the case studies used, rely heavily on government data and objectives: the end results are virtual clones of governmental procedures and expectations. The role of motivation of students towards independent thinking and the development of an inquisitive and experimental bent of mind so essential in a planner is generally absent in any curricula. That the student is more interested in obtaining a degree rather than the knowledge and skills to which the degree should testify has often been

cited by various analysts.¹ In fact, the quality of education has often been described as 'a spirit-deadening machine. It is a "crammers" college which requires cramming but which does not cram.'²

Thus, our planning schools are not training planners who could face the challenges thrown out by constantly evolving problems of a society in transition, but are instead reproducing carbon copies of their predecessor, products of British training and sensibilities, who when transplanted into the Indian context, continue to reflect the concerns and traditions of a bygone era. Nothing else could explain so succinctly the glaring poverty of our ideas in urban planning, because those who guide our urban future are, at least intellectually, relics, ill-trained, ill-equipped to confront or comprehend the problems they face except to regurgitate the format they were taught at school.

The movement of the planner from school to the government planning department is like the movement of a hand into a glove: he gets comfortably ensconced into the bureaucratic culture of the planning department for which he was trained, conforms to its expectations and reward structure which defines his professional destiny and, in time, this hierarchical upward progression into more senior positions becomes an article of faith, the source of professional legitimacy.

Talking to planners in the government planning departments, one is struck by two constantly recurring characteristics of this phenomenon. One is that hierarchical seniority connotes intellectual superiority. And the other is that planning is seen as the practice of 'getting things done': any theorising or criticism is seen as an alternative to this practice. But, unfortunately, things have not got 'done' or, at least, not as intended, and a source or cause of this situation is both the

education system and the career prospects of the planners.

Our colonial heritage has imposed a system of administration which values the generalist over the technocrat. This is not the place to examine this controversy, but it is pertinent to the context that the urban planner in India is, hierarchically, in a very hierarchy conscious society, a low level functionary. Professional planners in India have to work under severe handicaps and constraints. Very often they have to work under rules, regulations and service conditions which are not at all conducive to harnessing their creative talents. Indeed, there are situations where new ideas and innovations are frowned upon. Very often they are placed in unenviable positions under people who have little background and expertise or knowledge of the subject. Their interests, if any, are fleeting; their association with the planners is like birds of passage. All this results in avoidable demoralisation.³ In short, planners see themselves as cogs in a giant wheel.

Time and again analysts have pointed to the aversion Indian professionals have of getting their hands 'dirty'.⁴ This is true of the Indian planner. Seeking data, analysing them, drawing inferences and then formulating realistic policies based on hard data is 'dirty' work for which the Indian planner is not equipped, neither by his education and training nor natural inclination.

Certainly, one of the most disturbing aspects of the Second Master Plan for Delhi exercise conducted by the Delhi Development Authority is the qualitative and quantitative paucity of data. When DDA officials concerned with the Second Master Plan exercise are approached with specific requests for information which would certainly be required for their own work, one is told that they have none or that it would be available only after their plan was published. Besides the lack of con-

cern and the will to collect hard data, this also reveals a second facet in the attitude of the Indian planner towards the question of data which ultimately reflects on the quality of his work—that is the veil of secrecy which shrouds any information that he does possess or has access to.

While plans once they are published become public documents, the process of planning and the parameters on which the plans are based are only revealed, after considerable editing, as *ex post facto* data. There is no public debate to determine policy based on free (let alone statutory requirement as in the United Kingdom) availability of information; there is only provision for consideration of specific 'objections' to the published plan delivered *ex cathedra*. At no stage of the planning process is the planner held to be, nor does he even feel himself to be, accountable for his actions. This lack of accountability along with the earlier observations about his educational background and the bureaucratic milieu within which he operates, defines the first part of the failure of the planning process.

The second part concerns the planning methodology in practice in India to control the urban environment—the 'tools' employed by the planners. Basically, this consists of producing the Master Plan, and it would be fruitful to examine the efficacy of the Master Plan as a development document.

Master Planning has limitations and built-in values. By aligning perspectives, goals, laws and procedures and assigning a time schedule to them, development aspirations are set on a course. In a complex world, it provides an overview of the structural relationship among land use, transportation, community facility and services and provide for a sequential or scheduled progression of public action in relation to urban expansion. Its limitations lie in its architectural antecedents and its failure to take account of economic, socially rooted, cultural and public interest or political factors in the land-use planning process.

The major limitation to Master Planning is temporal in nature, in

1. Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, Pantheon, New York, 1968. See Part 7, Chapter 31 and 33.

2. Edward A. Shils, *The Intellectual Between Tradition and Modernity: The Indian Situation*. Mouton & Co., The Hague, 1961, p. 46.

3. Syed S. Shafi, Presidential Address during the 29th Annual Town and Country Planning Seminar of the Institute of Town Planners India. Journal of the ITPI, Volume 106: 1981.

4. Gunnar Myrdal, *op. cit.* pp 1645-1648.

that as an end-state document it fails to be responsive to evolving needs. Thus, a Master Plan for the year 2000 is no more than a projection of present-day conditions corrected and made neat on paper long before the year 2000.

The concept of the Master Plan to guide the development of cities is the legacy of British colonial administration. Whereas in Britain (and the USA and Europe) concepts of planning have evolved through societal feedback mechanism from initial social reform movements (from the earliest days of public health legislations) at the turn of the century, utopian (and anti-urban) ideals of the garden city movement of the twenties, the strongly technocratic framework of the forties, fifties and early sixties, and the current recognition and responsiveness to community needs in a pluralistic society, in India we have accepted and perpetuated a concept of planning in practice in Britain in the forties when we became independent.

Three basic characteristics may be discerned. Firstly, there is an obligation for an authority to produce a plan which is a statutory plan on which individual proposals can be assessed. This, in accordance with Britain's Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, is a specific, end-state land use plan. This plan, after it has been formulated by the authority is only then open to the public for inviting their objections, which are considered (or not) by the authority before it is put up to the government for approval. Secondly, there is a system of application for planning permission under which proposals for development are put to the local authority. Therefore, a bureaucratic procedure can prescribe individual action. And, thirdly, there is the use of compulsory purchase and public ownership of land for urban development.

This results in a very centralist and elitist view of planning. It becomes an exercise in State direction to secure ends which is alright if everyone is agreed on what is right and proper and in the best interest of the public as a whole by an elitist political and technical hierarchy. It was soon realised in Britain that this orthodox view did not respond to or

take into account economic and social developments and was insensitive to a range of social problems. The wholesale relocation of people was found to be not only a logistic problem but a remarkably complex affair and demanded a high measure of understanding of social processes and management techniques.

Then, it was realised that planning was not an apolitical process. With consensus eroded and, in a pluralist society, various citizen groups strongly articulated that there was not just one course of action for the future as was being thrust upon them by the planners. Thus, a view emerged which might be described as incrementalism as opposed to end-state planning: a matter of taking incremental advances with no commitment to long-term goals, as opposed to a decisive blue-print which defined successive stages of development. All this understanding resulted in their Town and Country Planning Act, 1968 and 1971, and the new reliance on the Structure Plan concept.

The major difference between the Structure Plan concept and the old style Development Plan (Master Plan) concerns the way people are involved in the plan-making process. Under the 1947 Act, there was no legal requirement that an opportunity should be given to people to involve themselves in the process of formulating the policies and proposals of the development plan for their area. There is simply a provision that people, under given circumstances, can make formal objections to proposals and have their objections heard in an enquiry. The 1968 Act, however, introduced the idea that people should have a legal right to participate in the formulation of the planning proposals themselves, apart from the legal right to make formal objections.

The provisions of the Act state that local planning authority must '... take steps such as in their opinion will secure that adequate publicity is given in their area to the report of survey and to the matters they propose to include in the plan, the persons who may be expected to desire an opportunity of making

representations to the authority with respect to those matters are made aware and are given adequate opportunity of making such representations. Additionally, the local authority is required to make copies of the structure plan available for inspection and submit the plan to the secretary of state together with a statement of the measures which have been taken to comply with the requirements and of consultations which have been carried out with other persons.'

The Indian planning scene has, however, not evolved beyond the orthodoxy of Britain's 1947 Act. The Second Master Plan for Delhi is being cast in the same mould, though the planners in DDA are articulating some fresh ideas. As part of its planning process, the DDA produced several monographs on various aspects of the task they have to undertake. These are pious documents filled with platitudes culled from a mixed, but unexceptionable list, and it becomes obvious that those statements were easier stated than intended to be implemented into tangible programmes.

In the monograph on 'objectives, goals and clientele for the Second Development Plan for Delhi',⁵ it is stated that the First Master Plan for Delhi under implementation since 1962 was only a 'land use plan', and the major recommendations like low housing densities tapering towards the periphery of the urban areas, the minimum standards recommended for housing, the traffic and transportation network in the form of arterial and ring roads, the concept of district centres for trade and offices, and the idea of implementation through zonal development plans, were provisions for the higher income class and upper middle class rather than the low income group. The paper states that today, a fifth of the population is living in unauthorised colonies, and another fifth has had to be settled in areas non-conforming to the Master Plan land use. Thus, there was more un-

5. Second Development Plan — Delhi — 2001, Delhi Development Authority, perspective planning wing, Monograph I; *Objectives, Goals and Clientele for the Second Development Plan for Delhi*, pp. 10, Mimeographed.

planned development than planned development.

The monograph then recommends certain 'obvious' goals for the Second Master Plan, which is admitted to be a quotation from the plan of Washington, but then goes on to state that these general objectives will not work because the 'heterogeneous character will conflict intersectorally within a client group when objectives are translated into programmes.' The 'real' and 'primary' client, the monograph states, is 'the poor'.

Having identified the client, three objectives are envisaged. One 'economic through physical' (sic). This is to be achieved through the three main economic activities in Delhi: (a) government service, (b) commerce and distribution, and, (c) industry. 'The money should flow down to our clientele' (sic) states the monograph, cryptically. The second objective, it appears (it is not very explicit in the monograph itself), is 'the higher economic level shall enter into the planning process to provide financial adequacy for our clientele.' And, the third objective is that 'Delhi being a capital of the largest democracy in the world, another objective of the plan would be the image of the city in our own country and at international level.'

On such conceptual foundations is the DDA producing the Second Master Plan. In talking to the planners, they state that basically the Second Master Plan will be an updating and extension of the First, and the paucity and unreliability of data, the limited time, under-staffing for the plan-making exercise makes anything more ambitious, unrealistic. It is interesting to note that when Daniel Burnham was producing his plan for Chicago at the turn of the century, he had a staff of several hundreds and fees in millions of dollars.

One must seriously consider the current conceptual framework which pervades the profession as highlighted by these monographs, for it must be remembered that the Second Master Plan of Delhi will spawn several hundreds of similar plans for all the towns and cities in India, as in the case of the First, and will

very much reflect professional attitudes for decades to come. Thus, while in many parts of the world there is a growing realization that what is required is not so much a plan as a planning process, the planners of the Second Master Plan, reflecting their architectural ancestry, continue to present a picture of an ideal final stage, much as plans for a building represent the completed building, and what remains is its implementation. Hence, their understanding of their job is to get things done, and display impatience with those who question things that get done.

Today, it is clear that in the nature of things every plan is tentative, both because information is imperfect and because there is no final stage: there is always a future beyond the stage projected. But this, (though it appears from some of the other monographs and talks with the planners that they are beginning to appreciate this situation), will not be reflected in the planning document itself, because the concept has neither been fully apprehended or debated, nor has it percolated the inertia of decades of conventional planning practice. But it is the process that determines the content. And, for a system to satisfy the demands made on it, it must first recognise the existence of the problem, and then propose solutions.

Planning must recognise the central importance of uncertainty and the demands of a pluralistic society, and of ways of managing it in a creative and positive way. This leads to a view of planning as being fundamentally a process of strategic choices — and the plan, or Master Plan, or simply the Policy Document — should provide a framework within which decision makers can cope effectively with uncertainties and with the inter-relatedness of choices facing them. But our planners and bureaucrats are averse to giving up the power conferred on them by the elitist and paternalistic system, and so our colonial heritage is perpetuated to meet the emerging problems of the year 2000.

However, in Britain, following introduction of the Structure Plan methodology in their Town and

Country Planning Act 1968, it has been noted⁶ that one trend has been for increased emphasis on policy formulation and the development of operational research applications to plan-making such as the 'strategic choice approach'. A parallel trend has been the increasing overlap between generation and evaluation and the policy formulation and generation stages of plan making. Both these trends have been accompanied by an increasingly flexible, iterative approach to the stages of plan-making which contrasts with the more mechanistic interpretation of earlier plans which we, in India, continue to follow.

To summarise, the changing attitudes to the role and function of the planner can be identified as being⁷ (a) blue-print to process planning; (b) physical to corporate planning; (c) planner's descent from the ivory tower; (d) a new comprehensiveness in respect of client identification; (e) recognition of planning as but one branch of a family of disciplines which use basically similar process; and, (f) replacement of handicraft tools by systematic methods from other disciplines and fields of activity. This has affected each of the five steps of the planning process — goal setting, plan formulation, plan evaluation, plan implementation, plan review and feedback.

The rational planning model, that planning is essentially a technical activity characterised by the task of fitting means to ends, is being rejected. It is asserted in fact that rational planning will lead to the end of the individual by progressively isolating the individual from social decision-making. Fewer and fewer topics become issues for political discourse. Alienation is the inevitable result as the society becomes unresponsive to the individual.⁸ Besides, in looking at things

6. D. Booth & M. Jaffe, *Generation and Evaluation in Structure Planning. A Review in Town Planning Review*, Volume 49 No. 4 October 1978, pp 445-457.

7. I.M. Robinson, *Decision-Making in Urban Planning*. London: Sage Publications Ltd. 1972.

8. Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*. Translated by Thomas McCarthy. Beacon Press, Boston, 1975.

only in terms of the way in which they happen to be functioning at the present time, the rational planning model characterised by its functionalism, makes what *is*, appear to be what *must* be, and smuggles in a concept of society based on consensus and equilibrium, rather than on conflict and disequilibrium, thus, unwittingly, supporting the status quo.⁹

The problem in India and other Third World countries is that no conceptual framework exists for implementing a benefit optimisation programme which is the goal of planning endeavour. There are economic analyses, social and political theories, but no unified theoretical structure which would enable planners to predict and plan on the basis of these ideas. And, unfortunately, it can be noticed that what theoretical ideas and methods there are, lag several years behind those in the countries of their origin, and where indeed, as we have seen, they have already been discredited or abandoned. We have to forge an independent system of planning based on indigenous thought and experiences.

Again, unfortunately, there is little effort evinced in this direction either in official circles or the Schools of Planning, to discuss these issues and consider the consequences of planning on borrowed concepts and where these are leading us. The Second Master Plan for Delhi, in spite of the planners' best intentions and efforts, cannot effectively guide us through the coming years, because it will essentially be like the First.

Finally, the search for solutions to the continuing and emerging problems of our man-made environment has generally been in the direction of reducing capital costs

of providing land, houses and services either by reducing standards or by reducing the number of people that are served. The problem is not primarily one of a quantitative nature, either financial or technical. The problem is to re-educate our planners and, indeed, ourselves, to build on our existing traditional resources rather than build anew. There is growing evidence of the necessity of reorienting our thinking in the direction of traditional patterns and local techniques of living and building and their need to be adapted to meet our housing and environmental problems rather than continue with the PWD genre.

E.B. Havell wrote in 1912: 'It may be that the English-educated Indians find the old Indian style of house irksome and incompatible with their ideals of comfort. But why, instead of showing the Indian traditional builder how to adapt his design to new requirements do they make him a bad imitator of inferior European architecture or employ Europeans to do that for them? If they act thus, with the idea that they are emulating the best traditions of Europe, they deceive themselves entirely, for no European house or palace yet built in this style would be considered first rate architecture in Europe even compared with the best modern buildings. If they do so from a want of faith in Indian artistic capacity, it is a confession of impotence and failure which is painful evidence of Indian intellectual degeneration, for never at any previous period of Indian history have Indian architects and craftsmen shown such incapacity ... if the forms prescribed by old Indian architectural traditions are not suitable they must be altered and you will find that it will be much easier for an Indian builder to adapt his art to India than it is for an European to produce good art for you...'¹⁰

Over 80 years later, Havell's prescription is even more valid. We did not listen then, will we listen now?

9. R.A. Sayer, *A Critique of Urban Modelling: From Regional Sciences to Urban and Political Economy in Progress in Planning*, Vol 6 Part 3, Oxford, Pergamon, 1976 and J. Lewis and B. Melville, *The Politics of Epistemology in Regional Science*, in P.W.J. Batey (Ed.) London Papers in Regional Sciences 8: Theory and Method in Urban and Regional Analysis, London, Pion, 1978.

10. E.B. Havell, *Basis for Artistic and Industrial Revival of India*: Adyar Library, 1912.

A city within the city

GAUTAM BHATIA

ARCHITECTURE is the mother of all the arts. It is a liberator of all senses — visual, acoustic and tactile. Architecture is the thoughtful making of spaces, the sculptural massing of forms brought together in light. In it are qualities of firmness, commodity and delight; the lamps of truth, beauty and sacrifice.

As a student of architecture ten years ago, I would never have doubted that architecture was anything but all this and much, much more. Long hours in a studio, drawing tirelessly, designing, comparing, criticizing utopias seemed to be worth it all. We were all students then — young and naive — and utopia was not a distant vision but a six-week project.

As a practising architect now, my vision has narrowed. I focus on little buildings — a house here, a bathroom addition there, a kitchen extension for a friend. I know the price of marble, the black market rate of cement. I talk passionately of mud buildings and the needs of the rural poor, but I do precisely the opposite. I build for free because I know I can collect my five per cent fee from the contractor.

I call myself a practising professional but Prabhat Niwas a middle-class house in New Delhi, is my only built project. It has a living-

cum-dining, three bedrooms, a servant's quarter, a tiny strip of lawn with a decorative shrub: a crumbling brick building, made to look solid by an expensive stone veneer, a formless piece of tripe made to look artistic by a fanciful facade; small, dark, dingy and airless rooms, badly planned, poorly serviced but nonetheless giving an impression of great generosity and infinite space. Built three years ago, it is today in dire need of physical and spiritual repair.

Prabhat Niwas was my first building. And, perhaps, my last. But that does not matter. Many others like me will come and go. Architecture, like the fall fashions, will be applauded quickly, but with the appearance of the new spring line, dropped as quickly. Books, as someone said, last longer; take up less space, are easier to take care of, make better gifts than most buildings.

For centuries buildings did not need architects. The Rambagh Palace, the Hawa Mahal nearby, the stone houses of Jaisalmer, the mud villages of Rajasthan, bamboo and thatch dwellings of Kerala were built intuitively by ordinary men and handicrafted by experience.

But such architecture remains only in history. The works of the Moghuls and of our ancient herit-

age are only novelty items today, bits and pieces of a past tied together by an English historian's thread. James Tod, Claude Battley may have been interested in our architecture, but their approach was a western one, and the attempt was somehow to fit India into a pattern of world architecture. No Indian has yet attempted to tie our past into an indigenous framework, from which present day architects may gain relevant inspiration.

Today, I can talk of revolving restaurants and prove that their architecture has come from Moghul minarets. I could cite reasons why factories are the only pure forms of architecture, even support the thesis that parking lots are an Indian phenomenon. I could devote a book to the argument that our contemporary architecture is rich with metaphysical illusion, historical continuity and structural and aesthetic finesse; and I could write another book to support precisely the opposite. In a country without architecture, anything is possible.

What then is the purpose of architecture? An American architect has quite rightly asked, 'Is the purpose of architecture to give architects something to do with their time on earth and the income to live well and raise a family. Or is there a higher purpose?'

In India, architecture has always aspired to a higher purpose, to nobler ends. In history, cities like Fatehpur Sikri were designed to uplift ordinary man from the depths of his moral chaos and propel him into a world of high art, learning and culture. Hindu temples, likewise, brought sinners face to face with their maker. The meeting was often so traumatic that many became instant believers. Many others switched to religions with less formidable makers. In all this architecture was held responsible.

But things are different now. Buildings are valued only for style, not content; old techniques and materials are desired but ill-afforded. The Taj Mahal may have provided the image for a 5-star hotel, even if the only reminders of it are in the logos and the ash-tray.

The architect has become a specialist in mimicry. He is only a middleman — a man with a bagful of gimmicks, who stands solemnly between his client and contractor and tries for his 1 per cent fee to reconcile the obscene ideas of one with the mediocre practicality of the other. The result is visible in the rich array of stylistic confusion that mars our cityscape. Architects seeking desperately to elevate middle class houses to architecture, bombard viewers with stylistic ornament and a mishmash of historical trivia. Such architecture requires no genius, no common sense. All that is needed is a readily available catalogue of historical spare parts and cheap labour to set them up.

Established architects seem to achieve the same ends for large projects by doing precisely the reverse. The self styled brutality of their concrete megaliths exploits the shock-value of the opposite extreme. In one, faking it has become an important architectural statement; plaster can be made to look like stone, temporary tenements can be made to look like ancient haciendas, laminated plastic like seasoned wood. In the other, serious architects look for truth in expression, find comfort in the belief that the unblemished surfaces of their building bring them closer to perfection, a purity of surface which may conceal acres of cramped airless space.

For all such architects, modern architecture is a noble, almost spiritual thing. It is beyond reproach, certainly beyond abuse. It is to be looked upon with awe and admiration. Its unadulterated shape, right out of a geometry book, is to be appreciated for its immense lunar starkness, its undying commitment to naked concrete, and above all, as a gift to the city. People are required to stand back from it, gaze wistfully at the clean lines and reflect that, yes, we are, after all better than animals. And even if our interiors are mean, cramped, poorly lit and airless we are a gifted race with refined sensibilities, and the concrete megalith in front is proof of it. And after we have gazed long at these graphic symbols of utopia, at the fleeting vision of a world

denied to us, we can return to our rat infested houses and damp tenements, but as better beings. Architecture has, indeed, affected the quality of our lives.

And the architect is our saviour. He guides the viewer into the building the way he himself experienced it on the drawing board. And when someone strays off the tour to look at a room or to use a bathroom in the hall, to spit on the wall or to misuse a balcony, the architect gets hurt. He has painstakingly designed memorable spaces, with North light and cantilevered staircases, awesome hallways that would make great, possibly double spread, photographs in American magazines. He might even be asked to show slides at the Council of Architecture meetings, to present his work to an international forum. Who knows, maybe some day even win a gold medal.

Not knowing the value of architecture, foolish people park their cycles in the exposed concrete lobby, piling crates in the fashionably cantilevered hallway. Can't they look up from their cluttered lounge to see that the skylight above is to elevate them to a higher plane?

But before they move in to destroy the building, pictures are taken: long, wide-angled shots of empty concrete halls with diffused light but without a glimmer of life. Sanitized bathrooms, tiles still in place and smelling fresh in the photograph. For the exterior, a wide angle obliterates the unsightly slums between which architecture has come up.

A year later, a model of the same building displayed in its lobby and the carefully preserved photographs remain as the only evidence of the original vision. But they, too, like the architect's memory, are blurred and faded; the model, the building within the building, only a grotesque caricature. Plans and photographs of it were once published, but they are filed away in a portfolio, and the architect has moved on to bigger and better assignments. He is now famous, dividing his time between the office and lecturing at foreign universities. He has even

been approached by publishers for a book or two.

But now he has no time and he has turned down the offer. He has become a hotel architect. He has designed the Taj Palace, the Ashoka, the Centaur. When a hotel chain needs architectural advice they will ask only him and they will make him a permanent member on their advisory committee. He is after all an infallible specialist.

Suresh Patel, another specialist, began his career with a cinema hall in Jullundur. Patel's hall was inaugurated with 'Mr. Natwarlal' in 1978. The movie ran for an unprecedented 126 weeks. It was a box office hit. So was Suresh Patel's cinema hall. Patel owes much of his success to the success of Mr. Natwarlal. For, since his first cinema hall in Jullundur, Patel has built movie halls — two in Rohtak, three in Ludhiana, two in Amritsar, four in Hoshiarpur with more commissions on the boards. Suresh Patel is a cinema architect.

After the Asiad there is now a new breed of stadium architects. Then there are the commercial building architects, the housing architects and even airport architects, and furniture architects and interiors architects. They are all specialists; they know their territory and they will happily stick to it.

Today if the spirit has gone out of architecture it is because the architect is no longer responsible for the shape of his buildings. That is determined by the petty businessman who has sunk a lifetime of savings into his dream house; by hoarders and racketeers whose black-money finds an architectural outlet in expensive materials put together in outlandish ways. Architecture is in the awesome edifices of public sector buildings; in the design of capital complexes and private apartment complexes. The rest which constitutes almost 90 per cent of building is not architecture. For you and I, and 700 million other Indians living in mean, cramped self-financing schemes, in squatter settlements or in rural huts, shopping in grim municipal market-places, strolling in desolate parks, sending children to cardboard box

public schools — architecture can go hang.

What has gone wrong; where is the firmness, commodity and delight of our past architecture? Should that even be a requirement of our new architecture?

The story begins in the house of a Swiss watchmaker, Jeanneret, in 1901. When a son was born to him that year, little could the proud father imagine that the young tyke was headed for greatness. Naturally, like any father he thought his son would join him in his family watchmaking business. But that was not to be. Thirty five years later, the younger Jeanneret had moved out of the house, out of the city, even out of the country to get away from a family business he despised. In Paris, in a small studio apartment he began to paint furiously. For an up and coming painter, Jeanneret was a name that gave away his provincial beginnings, so he opted for the more urbane Le Corbusier.

Within the first few months Corbusier had become obsessed with the Parisian lifestyle. He would wake up early in the morning to paint still-lives; after breakfast, when inspiration had waned, he would switch to architecture, designing fashionable houses. The afternoons were for writing, the evenings for discussing polemics at Left Bank cafes. Others like him would also naturally gravitate to such places; men like Picasso and Ozenfaunt, wearing berets, cigarettes in holders and fresh paint on their shirt cuffs — relatively mild men, turned cantankerous and belligerent by too much wine and rhetoric.

But Le, as many of his close friends began to call him, was not like them. He was not happy. Where others of his age and calibre would be content in mornings of croissants and crossword puzzles, Le was not easily satisfied. He was first and foremost an architect. And, first and foremost, architects must leave a memorable body of work for posterity. He had built several houses, but that was hardly enough. All he wanted was to design something big. Something like a city, perhaps even a country. Somewhere

far away where they had not heard of his rejected Voisen Plan for Paris. Maybe in some emerging, newly independent nation in Africa or Asia where he would be treated as God.

The timing was just right, the mood perfect. After three hundred years, India had managed to free herself from foreign domination. The country's institutions, philosophy, bureaucracy and architecture would now follow an Indian track. But nobody knew what or where that Indianness lay. For that we needed foreign experts. Corbusier was to help us find our architecture.

In fact, when he arrived in India, paint still fresh on his spirit, the architectural rhetoric pungent on his Gallic lips, he was accorded a welcome reserved at best for ministers. From here onwards, I will take you into an imaginary scene, an imaginary conversation which according to me could not be so far removed from actual possibility. Pandit Nehru embraced Corbu with traditional Kashmiri warmth, his face an expression of infinite relief; the great white hope had come. Now we were in safe hands. On the way back from the airport, between the inevitable exchanges about the weather, the subtleties of French wine, Panditji threw in a word or two about the partition of Punjab and if Corbuji could suggest, during the course of his stay, a plan for the new capital city of Chandigarh. 'It is indeed an honour to have such an eminent architect with us,' he said; 'of course, you understand we are a poor country and we can't afford exorbitant professional fees. Could you do Chandigarh for 1 per cent; the rest you could take as a kick-back from the contractor.'

Nehru was a pragmatic man. He had already sensed the direction architecture would take, but Corbusier was an artist. 'Dismiss the thought, Panditji,' he said, 'what is 1 per cent to a man who has got the wish of a lifetime. What are a few odd rupees to an artist whose contemporaries are still designing additions to kitchens in Paris.'

Nehru had a vision for a new India. Corbusier had a vision for a

new Corbusier. But if the ends were different, the means were the same. Architecture for democracy, both espoused, where the masses inhabiting grandiose public buildings would derive the strength for their secularism.

So, one fine morning, his beret fashionably angled, his heavy lenses sparkling, Corbusier drove out into Kipling's Punjab to select a site for his masterpiece. On a flat dusty plain below the Himalayas, he planted a flag and while the band played the National Anthems of India and France; while hastily rounded Brahmins performed puja and recited mantras; while native devotees flocked to get a glimpse of their new master; Corbu was already at work, thinking. He would do the city plan and design the important government buildings of democracy and his local lackeys would do the more mundane buildings like housing for the masses, shopping centers for the masses, and schools and other trivia for the masses. With that he folded his sketch pad and flew back to Paris.

And when the Brahmins had finished their evocative recitations, their deeply felt chantings, when the *chelas* opened their eyes to bathe in the radiance of their guru, the master was already somewhere over the Mediterranean. They realized they would have to fend for themselves; they felt cheated. But later when the plans were flown in from Paris to the disciples gathered to receive them they were like a message from heaven.

Slowly, very slowly — for democracy is a tedious process — a democratic city began to take shape. A great cartesian grid of wide roads was arbitrarily dropped from the sky.

Though the Indian architect was puzzled at the severity of the plan, at the miles of concrete emptiness it advocated, he was satisfied. The visionary was a great artist and the plans had come from the direction of France. India's new found freedom could be practised on miles of useless, far, in great dust bowl plazas and commercial complexes. Indian

culture was too complicated, its attitude towards habitation too provincial. Democracy lay in the openness, away from the wretchedness of India's traditional towns. Corbusier was a modern city slicker and this was to be a great leap forward.

Every few days a fresh package of instructions would arrive: make everything concrete. What about doors, someone would ask. An answer would arrive in the return mail: use wood and paint them yellow. Through the course of construction, the Indian architect followed instructions diligently and watched in amazement a Frenchman making waves, creating history in his own country. And he felt mighty proud.

Other native architects began to congregate to Chandigarh to get a glimpse of the master, to grovel at his white feet, so that generations to come would remember that they too were involved in the making of history. And Indian architects could scarcely believe that one like him in flesh and blood, walked this earth. And when God flew in for his annual site visit he was lovingly carried out into the dusty plain on a palanquin supported by hordes of Indian architects, miles of cheap Indian labour. He too knew his time had come. He was indeed God. When he asked them to stop, they would stop. When he asked them to go on, they would do so. They were his devotees and happily followed his sacred routine.

Some began to wear French berets and thick glasses. Others began to paint and write feverishly, discussing architectural polemics over wine and French toast, in the faint hope that someday they too would achieve greatness. But they were not white and Nehru was not looking for brown saviours. Their only hope lay in a lifetime commitment to Corbusian mimicry. Brutal and frank concrete buildings were carefully imitated from Chandigarh models and functions stuffed into them.

When Chandigarh was exhausted, architects began to look at Corbusier's other work. The Mill Owners Association was a fine building and it was readily adapted for Delhi's main bus terminus.

Today, even thirty years after the funny looking Frenchman had departed, Chandigarh remains a caricature of a Master's vision. Like a controlled scientific experiment, the city lives and grows in a vacuum. It is not affected by the natural process of urbanization that other cities are undergoing. Millions are not allowed to just move in randomly and pick out sewer pipes for housing. Street culture is discouraged. There are no *paan* shops, no squatter settlements. People, brought in from the outside are housed in row after row of pigeon holes, painted white and neatly numbered — House No. 186/2, Sector 38A. All identity has been quashed in an attempt to maintain a uniformly barren architecture. Chandigarh is a desolate and hollow memorial. The work of a European artist, it remains even today as inflexible, authoritative and perfect as the man that created it.

Indeed, for Corbusier, Chandigarh may have been the end of a dream, but for Indian architecture it was the beginning of a nightmare. Concrete columns and exposed walls, awkward and ugly to the untrained eye but full of meaning and hope to the architect began to grow everywhere. From Kerala to Kashmir, from remote desert towns to fancy hill stations, modern architecture, like a contagious disease, had spread throughout India. Its much touted dictum — form follows function — became a curse.

It was naively and simplistically interpreted by both architects and clients to mean that if a building were designed as a factory it must appear a factory from outside. And if a building were a house, it must not look like a cinema hall. No period in architectural history has been more written about, more widely read and talked about than the modern period. And still there is no other country in the world where modern architecture is so badly represented, its dictum so thoroughly misunderstood and its manifesto so completely maligned, than India.

There is a monumental ugliness in our buildings which goes beyond just poor workmanship and sub-

standard materials. Every cinema hall is a decorated concrete shed; every factory is an undecorated one. But in design, layout and planning, and in details of construction, quality of landscaping, they are exactly the same. It is only the applied decoration, the cosmetic finish which makes one more special than the other. That is the primary distinction in our architecture, whatever may be the building. The factory is an ugly, concrete box, the cinema hall is also an ugly concrete box — but painted and slightly less offensive; the house too is a concrete box, decorated and hiding behind a self-indulgent facade.

Firmness, commodity and delight may have at one time been the valid determinants of architecture, but in an age of rapid change and planned obsolescence, instant acceptance, instant boredom and instant rejection, it is difficult to say if the same holds true anymore. In America — as in Europe — relatively solid buildings are destroyed because times change, and architecture like everything else must reflect that change. If history is to be preserved, it is done in carefully selected fragments. In India, however, such an attitude would be gross extravagance. Buildings, like everything else, must be saved. And if architecture destroys itself, it is only because it was poorly built in the first place. History will just have to look after itself; if any of it is saved, it is only because nature has been kind to it.

Today in America, architecture is no longer just an art of delineating space for people. People will always be there and so will space and buildings. The new architecture is of sensory experience: visual and tactile. It requires no training, no learned knowledge, no obsessive ideology, sometimes no light and air, no windows and no doors. Michael Graves, as the new hero-architect of this movement, builds beautiful objects. His office building for the Portland Cement Co., is from within only a mean, ordinary structure, but outside it is a jewel, rich with symbols of cement — painted and textured. Claes Oldenburg, makes an architectural event out of an ordinary two-inch clothes pin by making it sixty feet high and

clamping monumental underwear on a clothes line. Another man in New York 'creates environments' by building walls out of gunny bags of seeds. When the seeds sprout they break upon the surface and create rooms of vegetables which you eat.

But of the American architects the most innovative are not architects at all. A group called SITE has conceived, designed and actually built some outrageous projects. In a series of buildings for BEST catalogue showroom, Site architects have evolved a style whereby the process of building, its inherent use and subsequent destruction are all part of the architecture, sometimes part of the same building. At the Best showroom in Kentucky, shoppers walk through a cracked wall which pulls out on rollers to become the showroom entrance. In another, the debris from a partially destroyed parapet wall lies crumbled on the porch. In what is their most outlandish scheme, is a showroom where trees and shrubbery have taken over the building, where nature overwhelms the shopper by slowly destroying the architecture.

Techniques such as these add valuable wit and whimsy to buildings that are inherently dull. But obviously no architectural philosophy can be based on humour alone. And perhaps the most valid criticism against American design is that it is entirely subjective, formed out of personal fancies. In America it may be credible. In India buildings which glorify personal expression at the expense of the more serious architectural needs of society are out of place.

For Corbusier it was Chandigarh — a city unimaginative and inhospitable, which, like Fatehpur Sikri should have been abandoned at creation, for some unknown reason still survives; for Correa it may be the LIC building in Connaught Place — a building built at enormous public expense and at the cost of a city center; for Raj Rewal a soaring concrete megalith in the NDMC building, a conscious obliteration of an ancient monument; for Stein, a 5-star hotel that desecrates paradise; and for all the lesser architects, an anonymous shopping-cum-office

complex in some small town somewhere; and finally for the little guy just starting out, a middle class house in a posh colony — twisted, gnarled, fanciful and grotesque, but nonetheless, a monument.

In every society there will always be a few jewels commissioned by the rich; there will always be businessmen with too much money and no ideas of their own; there will always be capital complexes and public sector undertakings, but compared to the rest of the building requirement these are miniscule endeavours. In the year 2000 A.D. our population is estimated to be one billion. With the increased demand for building, architecture will require broader, more socially conscious strokes. If the current trend of construction continues there will be a demand for fifty million new houses, almost a half of the housing stock existing today, along with a proportionate increase in facilities: schools, markets, stations, civic amenities and public buildings.

Unless architecture transcends its traditional scope, architects have little say in determining the shape of these buildings. Government engineers and technicians, secure in their job, will continue to churn out row after mindless row of self-financing schemes, buildings which express with a depressing regularity the inconsequentiality of the individual within; cardboard boxes, labeled schools but which are in themselves a deterrent to learning, will spring up everywhere, as will concrete sheds called post offices, railway stations and other public buildings.

Herein lies the crisis of architecture in India. In a country beset with some of the most pressing problems and challenges, architecture remains a profession of the elite; a few odd architects designing a few odd buildings for a few odd clients. It is like the theatre of the absurd. When much of Europe was wracked with poverty, war and famine, its art remained aloof. Plays continued to depict romantic scenes, love and peace, while Europe burnt.

The architect today must begin by recognizing that all the pieces of our environment — houses, streets,

buildings, parks, towns and cities — are obsolete. If he continues to build the conventional way, he will only add a few fancy shapes to an already over-burdened cityscape.

Because of borrowed ideology, technology and lifestyle, there is no Indian identity to our modern architecture. The only hope lies in the post-modern generation — free from the Occidental reverence of their predecessors — that may begin to recognize and acknowledge in its work an Indian sense of place. This may even require a re-examination of lifestyle and technology, but unless the inspiration comes from the extraordinary challenges facing a country of one billion, future historians may as well write off 20th century India as an architectural era of any worth. But perhaps things will change, and architecture, affected by the economic and social turmoil of our times, will regain its eminence.

Before setting up my practice, a fellow architect had proclaimed, 'it is only in countries like ours that the architect can exercise true creativity, show his real worth.' At that time I had returned to India, because it looked to be the promised land of architecture. And I had believed him. Now, two years later, looking at buildings that are only impractical, expensive and unimaginative, I'm not so sure.

In keeping with Mr. Rajiv Gandhi's pursuit of excellence, I propose a 5 point programme for excellence in architecture:

1. Decentralize all construction activity. The practice of awarding work to private architects on government approved panels should be abolished. Projects such as railway stations, bus stops, bridges, housing, post offices, dams are today of inferior design, materials, and workmanship because architects and engineers enlisted by Municipal and State Corporations, Housing boards etc., are insured a steady supply of work by virtue of their influence and connections.

2. All major public sector projects in architecture and engineering

should be awarded on a competitive basis. Where actual competitions are held, designs should be made public, as should the record and selection of the judging committee, the architect and the contractor.

3. Students of architecture should be required to serve a three year probationary period with an architect in the State where they wish to practice. The Council of Architecture in each State would conduct an examination testing the design structural capabilities before granting the licence. A blanket licence to practice throughout India without practical experience, and a sound background of local technology and architecture, will only produce more desecration.

4. A new set of building codes and bye-laws should be written to incorporate traditional materials and methods into current practice. Today all constructions of mud, bamboo, thatch, are considered illegal and temporary.

5. Today the city is viewed as a mere collection of municipal services. A city museum should monitor all major architectural activity. As a 'city within the city', it should be a permanent repository of the city's past, present and future — guiding its development, judging the merits and demerits of architectural proposals, recording its monuments and suggesting their reuse — a place where citizens may get a view of their own house, their street and their city and thereby begin to exercise control over their environment. With a comprehensive perceptual record of the city planners, architects and, indeed, the public would be able to assess the impact of future constructions and their assessment would influence their decision on what and how to build, or whether to build at all.

There has never been any attempt to define in simple term the kind of setting Indians would like to live in — an architecture that identifies that Indian sense of place. 'A city within the city' may be a beginning.

A self-sustaining approach

ADITYA PRAKASH

THE industrial era has caused differentiations in the human activities of living, working and recreation in the name of 'efficiency' in production and management. Unfortunately, this has led to over-centralization, causing the growth of big urban conglomerations and depletion of comprehensible human settlements. The basis of the growth has been 'economics' and not 'human happiness.'

Indeed, with greater productivity, human well-being has suffered, till

man himself has tended to become a tool in the vast mechanical world of his own making. This system is primarily responsible for the overall pollution of atmosphere, water, and land — environment. It is also responsible for the indiscriminate destruction of the resources of living available from the 'environment.'

Nature has always been sustained by cyclic or ecological systems. Everything returns to its source. Water, evaporating, travelling the

skies, precipitating and flowing, finally returns to the sea from where it initially evaporated. Air is breathed by living beings — human and animal — consuming oxygen for life support and exhaling carbon-dioxide as waste, which becomes food for plants again exhaling oxygen as waste.

It is quite true that man has always tended to disturb the balance of nature. In fact, the creation of several great deserts on earth is attributed to disturbance by man. For a long time in human history, the quantum of disturbance being small, and the population to land ratio being large, nature has been able to adjust the imbalance. But the industrial civilization has tended to upset the balance, so much that the life on earth has approached the threshold of a major man-made catastrophe.

It is high time that we take a look at the fundamentals of human settlements, and evolve a system whereby we can live a rewarding life of happiness and prosperity, making the best use of the knowledge that man has acquired. Happiness for all can only be had by ensuring 'plenty' for all, and by ensuring *minimum* 'waste'. This can only be done by creating units of living in which each resource is to put to maximum 'productive' use and 'cycled' for re-use to the extent our present knowledge permits. The unit has to be of human comprehension so that it does not become abstract or dehumanised like in a vast industrial empire.

The purpose of this study is to examine the possibility of creating a 'universal' living environment, as self sufficient as possible, through agriculture, horticulture, vegetable farming, animal husbandry, fishery, poultry, bee farming and cottage industry, and cycling the waste from one activity for utilization by the other, so that very little goes to waste. The intention is also to establish a living pattern so that, despite happenings in the world over which a community has no control (for example: an oil embargo, a fall in the value of currency, depletion of tourist traffic, state of conflict

between nations affecting foreign trade), such a community may be able to sustain a reasonable life pattern from its own resources.

Living consists of having a house and regular supply of nutrients and energy. We are here concerned with the nutrients from the land and animals, and energy from coal and electricity etc. In our present system the nutrients are produced far away from the places of living and transported for consumption by railways, trucks and other means of transport, and the energy is conveyed through wires, pipes and also by transport. We also need large quantities of pure water which is supplied by pipes in privileged living places. Elsewhere people fetch water from wells, rivers and ponds.

In most cases there is a big waste of energy in transportation of the supplies. There is even greater waste in the disposal of waste products from the households. The waste water, the excreta, the vegetable and animal waste are considered a nuisance and mostly disposed of at considerable cost on the outskirts of the places of habitation, causing pollution of the environment. In a few cases the wastes are processed, e.g., sewage treatment plants — and the manure thus produced is utilized. Rainwater when it falls on open land finds its way to the underground natural reservoir through percolation, but when waste water is disposed of through pipes, it does not find its way back to the original source and this causes water scarcity in the underground resources.

It is said that all smell from animal wastes (excreta) comes from its energy content: methane gas. Left as it is, this gas is a nuisance to the environment and a waste of energy. If harnessed, it is a useful product with no pollution of the environment.

It is worthwhile to integrate with living the production of those nutrients which should be consumed immediately after production, such as milk, eggs, meat, fish, vegetables, and fruits. It is not considered desirable to integrate production of wheat, rice, pulses, oil-seeds, etc., with living as these pro-

ducts can more profitably be produced in large areas of land and can easily be stored over long periods, and transported to the place of consumption at convenient intervals.

In general it can be said that such a scheme of integration of living and farming and animal husbandry is likely to produce the following results.

1. Greater employment near the place of habitation.
2. Recycling of waste so that very little ultimate waste will be left for final disposal.
3. Scientific application of knowledge in farming.
4. Decrease in the stress on transportation systems which are now becoming a bane of all habitation areas.
5. Less environmental pollution.
6. Availability of essential supplies next to the place of living.

For the purpose of this study I have assumed a settlement of 500 families or 2,500 persons at the rate of 5 persons per family. There is no definite basis for this assumption, nor is it to be considered rigid. But it does make for a reasonably good sized neighbourhood in India. It could start with about 250 families and ultimately grow up to 500 families or so. The actual plan prepared for this paper contains 448 dwelling units. For the purpose of ease of calculations we shall, take these as 450 units (Fig. 1).

A small residential unit has been assumed which consists of:

Ground Floor: Two rooms 150 sq. ft. each (approx.) including kitchen facilities, one courtyard with toilet and storage facilities.

Upper Floor: One room 150 sq. ft. and a terrace (Fig. 2).

This house, which is meant to contain a family of five persons, gives an occupancy ratio of less than two persons per room which, according to Indian conditions, is very good indeed. It is possible to add another room at a later stage. Indeed the whole plan can be developed in stages starting with just one room

have to rent a house in the open market. The proposed plan is not meant to be rigid. It should be modified to suit the genius of the designer at a particular situation, provided the land occupied per house does not increase.

This size of plot and house may appear to be small to some people (specially state employees living in state-provided accommodation) but is indeed much better than what most well-to-do people can afford in the towns and cities of India if they

As already stated, I wish to plan so that the settlement area can provide those items of nutrition that can be consumed immediately on

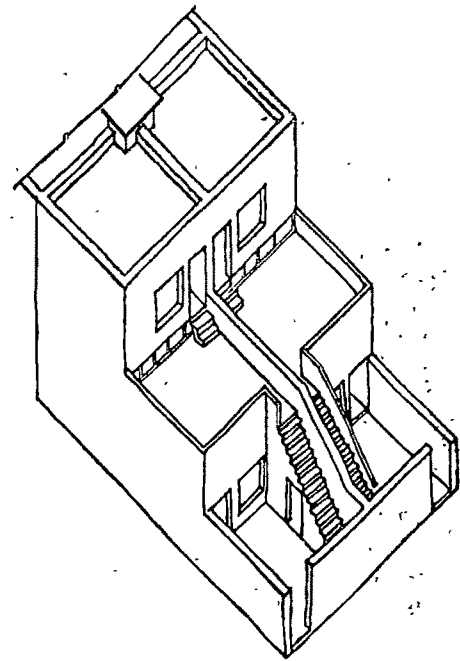
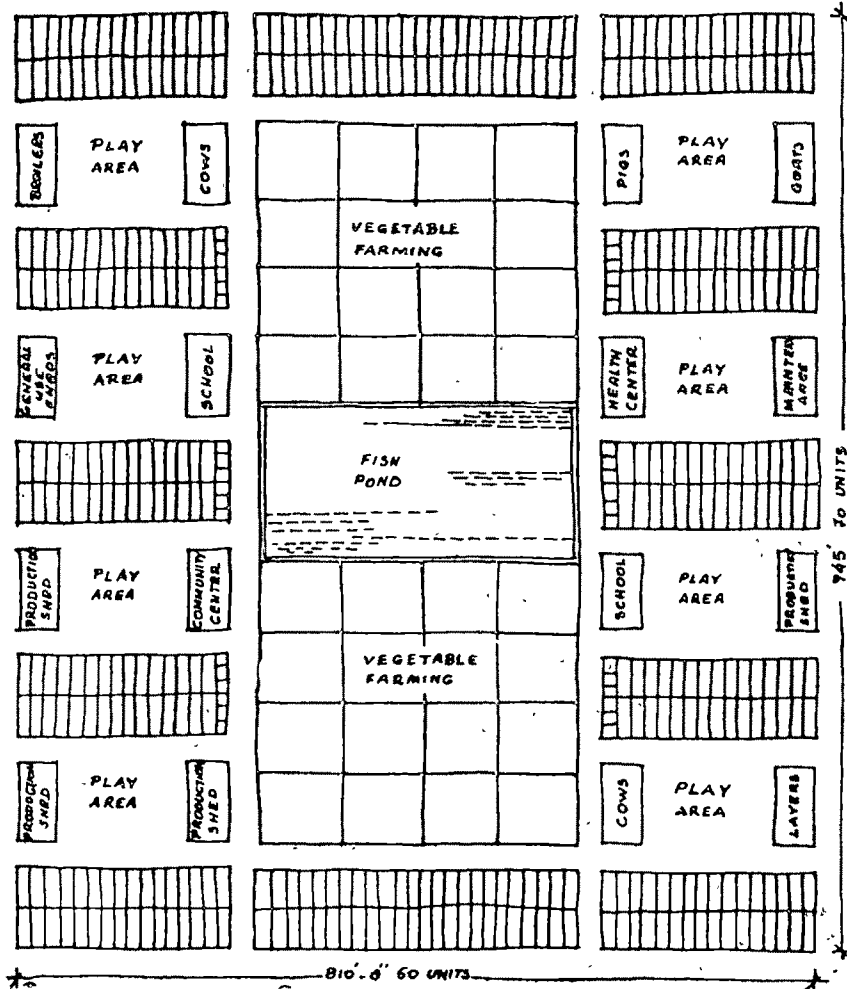


Fig. 2: View of the proposed house.

production, and to establish a cycle of consumption of the products and waste products between the human beings, the animals and cultivation. Thus it is proposed to keep cows for milk; goats, pigs, fish, and broilers for meat; laying birds for eggs and farmland for vegetables.

For computing the nutrition requirements of the families, it has been assumed that 70 per cent of the families will be non-vegetarian and 30 per cent of the families vegetarian. Information on nutrition has been derived from Home Science College text books. For our purpose we have assumed 'moderate' working families consisting of one adult male, one adult female, two adolescents and one infant. Thus our calculations are by no means applicable to all settlements, nor are they going to be entirely correct. But they provide a working basis for planning a settlement.

The purpose is to produce these requirements within the settlement. It is, therefore, necessary to study the problems and potentials of the animals, fish and vegetables. The figures presented here are drawn from the National Dairy Research Institute, Punjab Agricultural University, Department of Fisheries.



Total area=810 ft.×945 ft.=765, 460 sq. ft.=17.5 acres=7.09 hect.

Total area = 310 sq. ft. = 3.5 ac.		Total area = 430 sq. ft. = 4.9 ac.		Total area = 175 ac.		Total area = 175 ac.	
				Employment		Persons	
				Shops — 36		72	
				Sheds — 4 × 30		120	
Families: 404; Population: 2,020; Density: 115/acre		Vegetables				12	
Veg. plot = 4 acres = 1,80,000 kg		— 400 families		Fish pond		2	
Fish pond = 1 acre = 1,320 kg		— 34 families		Cows		17	
Goats = 1,600 sq. ft. = 220 goats		— 220 families		Pigs		2	
Pigs = 1,600 sq. ft. = 30 + piglets		— 2,000 families		Goats		5	
Broilers = 3,000 sq. ft. = 3,000 chickens		— 375 families		Broilers		2	
Layers = 3,000 sq. ft. = 1,250 chickens		— 600 families		Layers		2	
Milk:				School — 800 pupils		30	
Cows = 3,200 sq. ft. = 46 cows		— 480 families		Health		15	
Goats = 1,600 sq. ft. = 110 goats		— 220 families		Maintenance		18	
				Community center		5	
				Open trade		10	
Fig. 1: Layout Plan 1.						Total 312	

Fig. 1: Layout Plan 1.

and interviews with farmers. The difficulty has been that none of the above institutions, nor the farmers, have been tackling the problem from the point of view of integrating the products with human settlements. All the work seems to have been done either for research or for commercial exploitation.

Thus, a farmer is interested in growing vegetables or rearing poultry for the purpose of selling in the city market to meet the demand and to earn a profit. He is not interested in knowing how much nutritional value his products have or how many families his farm could support. Similarly the universities and the Institute have animal sheds and vegetable farms basically for research purposes, and not for production and integration with the living environment.

It is, therefore, necessary to explain the assumptions that have been made regarding the housing requirements, productivity and costing of all the animals and activities we have incorporated in the plan.

Cows are kept in 'loose housing' in confined areas which are partly covered and partly open. Each cow requires 30 sq. ft. covered area, 20 sq. ft. ancillary covered area for calves and stores, and 35 sq. ft. of open area. A minimum of 10 cows can be kept economically, but 30 cows make an optimum economic unit. One such cow provides milk for 7 or 8 families. Such a cow is assumed to produce 15 kg. of dung per day which can be converted into 19.5 cu. ft. gobar gas and 3.5 cart-loads of fertilizer which will fertilize about 500 sq. yds. of land. One hectare (approx. 2½ acres) of land is required for growing fodder for 10 cows. One person is required for looking after 5 cows. But additional persons are required for handling the gobar gas plant and for processing the milk. Thus 30 cows are expected to generate employment for 8 persons.

Goats are kept in 'loose housing.' Each goat requires 8 sq. ft. covered area, 6 sq. ft. ancillary covered area for kids and storage, and 8 sq. ft. of open area. Goats are kept essentially for meat, but also yield milk, which

though not very popular, is very good for invalids and children. One cross-bred full grown goat costing approximately Rs. 300 breeds twice in one year and yields two kids each time (average per year 4.22).

If the goat population in a shed is to be maintained at a constant level, then each goat will make 3 goats available for slaughter every year (maturity for slaughter is reached in 21 months). But since a shed will inevitably have about 1/3 he-goats growing for slaughter and about 2/3 for breeding we will get an average of 2 kids per goat for slaughter per year. Each goat gives about 50 kg of meat. Of this 75 per cent is assumed to be consumable.

The by-products from goats are hair, skin and hoofs, which are used for making brushes, leather goods and glue respectively. Three persons can look after about 100 goats. Land required for growing fodder is approximately 1/2 hectare 1-1/4 acre for 100 goats, but it can be reduced if leaves, etc., are fed to the goats.

Pigs, also reared in 'loose housing,' are raised entirely for meat. The mortality rate in pigs is rather high — 30 per cent. But a sow gives birth to as many as 60 piglets in a year and each piglet is ready to breed in about 6 months' time. This means that it can be assumed that each sow will provide at least 40 live pigs for slaughter in a year and it may be assumed that each pig will give about 75 kg of consumable meat.

Hair, blood and hoofs of pigs are saleable items. Computing the space requirements for pigs is rather difficult, because the pigs breed fast, and most people keeping pigs do not rear them under shelter. Although an individual sow may not need more than about 12 sq. ft, it has been assumed that each sow with its piglets and ancillaries may need about 50 sq. ft. of covered space (as much as for a cow) and 40 sq. ft. of open space. Even so, rearing pigs proves to be most profitable as they can be fed almost anything, including wastes which no one else consumes, and, therefore, the cost of feed is very small. Manpower requirements may be taken as two

persons for looking after, feeding, and slaughtering, etc., about 20 sows and their litters.

Chickens can be kept in entirely confined sheds. No open space is needed for them. Being light and easily transportable they can be housed on upper levels, say the roofs of houses or other animal sheds. There are two types of poultry: broilers for meat and layers for eggs. They are kept separately.

Broilers being small require 1 sq. ft. covered space per bird. The floor of the shed has a layer of rice-husk 3-4 inches or 10 cm thick. Bird droppings turn this into manure which amounts to 1 quintal for 10 birds in 1 year (bird droppings without rice-husk are also useful for the fishponds). A broiler bird is ready for slaughter in 8 weeks, when it weighs 800-900 gr. and in that time it consumes 2.5 kg of feed. Two men can look after up to 5,000 broilers.

Layers require 2.5 sq. ft. covered space per bird. The floor is covered with rice-husk as for the boilers, and the yield of manure is 1 quintal for 4 birds. Feed requirements are the same but the quantity consumed by each bird is 42 kg per year. Layers begin to lay eggs when 8 weeks old and continue to do so till they are 18 months old when they are sold for meat. A thousand birds are expected to produce 225,000 eggs. Two men are required to look after up to 2,000 birds. The birds need injections and medicines to keep them free of diseases.

Fish farming in ponds is now a practical and profitable proposition. The basic intention of a pond within a housing settlement is to have a place for storage and processing of waste water from the houses before it is used for irrigating the vegetable farms. If the water in the pond is sprinkled with cow dung and chicken waste manure, it gives rise to algae and water plants on which the fish feed. Fish prevent harmful insects from breeding and thus eliminate the nuisances of a pond. Various types of fish that can be reared in still pondwater are: Kalta, Rahu, Mirgal, Kalabans, Mirror Carp, Common Carp and Grass

Carp. They grow rapidly without competing with each other for food, but they do not breed in standing water. Therefore, fish seed has to be obtained from fish farms at Rs. 50 for a thousand seeds.

Fish ponds can be any size — even as small as 1/4 acre with a depth from 4-1/2 ft. to 6 ft. (1-1/2m to 2m) and they should be lined with some impervious material so that water does not leak out. One fish pond of 1/2 hectare (1-1/4 acre) will produce approx. 4,500 kg of fish per year. One person working part time can look after such a fish pond.

Vegetable farms can be continuously cultivated and 4 crops (2 winter and 2 summer) can be obtained in 1 year. Vegetable farming needs constant care — weeding, watering, spraying etc. After each crop the field has to be prepared for the next one by digging, watering and manuring. This takes about 15 days. A crop of vegetables gives a produce of 100-125 quintals per acre, depending on the type of vegetable grown (excluding the plants which serve as animal feed). It may thus be assumed that an acre of land will produce approx. 450 quintals of vegetables per year. A minimum of 2 persons is required for looking after 1 acre of vegetable farm. But for weeding 6 persons are required per acre, and weeding has to be done once a week. Some persons are also required at the time of preparation of the ground. Thus it may be assumed that 3 persons per acre are required for gradual farming, sowing and weeding.

On the basis of the assumptions regarding nutrition and the productivity of various animals and the vegetable farm it will be seen that the expenditure on items outside the farm is going to be considerable, and is more than what is likely to be met from the income of rearing animals and growing vegetables, etc. But if further wealth is generated by incorporating small-scale industries, we may narrow the gap of the shortfall.

For this purpose, the plan makes provision for small-scale industrial sheds. The following activities are

intended to take place in these sheds.

1. Leather work, from the skins of the slaughtered animals. Thus the requirements of shoes, belts, suitcases can be met on the spot.
2. Brush making — from the hair of pigs and goats.
3. Creamery — from the spare milk of cows and goats.
4. Spinning and weaving — for this purpose cotton will have to be bought from outside.
5. Food processing — from surplus meat.
6. Tailoring, dyeing, laundering, etc.
7. Repairs of all types: cycles, store, shoes, utensils etc.

It may even be possible to create a small-scale building industry and building service on the settlement so that the settlers can draw upon it to build their houses and sheds.

The study of the various layouts has revealed that it is possible to create a self-sustaining living environment in which the basic perishable food requirements are produced on the site itself. Whereas the production of vegetables takes a lot of land, and is, therefore, not expected to generate surplus wealth, the production of meat and milk takes very little space to meet the requirements of nutrition. It is, therefore, shown that these products can generate enough surplus wealth to meet the requirements of the other essential items of nutrition — namely, cereals, pulses, sugar and oil.

Thus it is seen that the surplus wealth produced by growing perishable nutrition items will meet the cost of the non-perishable items which will have to be purchased from the market. But this surplus is not intended to be spent directly on the purchase of the food grains, etc., but on the promotion of cottage industries such as those listed above. The purpose is to generate more employment and more surplus, so that eventually the expenses of clothing, houses, schools, medical, and community facilities can be met

from the wealth produced by a self-sustaining settlement.

The layout plans also show that 50 to 75 per cent of the heads of households can find employment on the settlement. This does not account for management work, building labour, and other persons engaged on casual work, and it may be possible that all families can find employment on the settlement if more intensification of utilization of resources is practised by new scientific methods. But it is not possible to visualize that at this stage. Space for extra activities can, however, be created within the layout plan by making two or three storey structures instead of single storey sheds.

There is hardly any place in the world where the water supply has not become scarce. In our settlement it is intended that the water is circulated to full utilization. The initial supply of water to the houses can be from a tube-well, or a city supply system. If these are not available, there should be no objection to installing a handpump in each house as the basic source of water supply.

Waste water from washing should be collected through pipes to a sump near the fish pond (which is built at a higher level) and pumped into it. The pump should run on the gas generated by gobar or human excreta. From the fish pond the water should be used for irrigating the vegetable fields and open spaces. As the pond is at a higher level this can be done by gravity. From the fields the water will percolate to the sub-soil and recharge the original source.

The use of the normal flush system for the disposal of night soil is not intended because it is wasteful of water. Night soil, which can be flushed by a small quantity of water poured by a tumbler, is itself a generator of methane gas and manure and it can also be combined with cow dung. The waste water remaining after production of the gas is free from smell and can be used for irrigation like the waste water from washing, etc. By this method the usual large sewers of urban settlements can be eliminated and the whole water disposal can take place within the settlement.

The essential prerequisite for any settlement is the creation of jobs, or better, self-employment. Employment should be such as to produce reasonable surplus from subsistence so that a person can pay for clothing and shelter. Only under such conditions, is it worthwhile to undertake the establishment of a human settlement. It is, therefore, clear that the wealth generating or employment creating activities have to take precedence over the building of houses. Therefore, the rearing of various animals for milk, meat and eggs, and establishing vegetable farm buildings, fish ponds and gobar gas plants have to take precedence over building houses. Thus, one finds that building labourers and craftsmen are the first to move to the site of any new settlement. The building labourers build temporary shelters for themselves from the materials with which the regular structures are to be built and, when their work is over, the temporary shelters are dismantled and the building labour force moves on to another site.

The best policy would be to lease land to anyone who comes to work on any proposed settlement who has some skill in masonry, carpentry, smithy, plumbing or other crafts like floor laying, waterproofing, electric wiring etc. They can be allotted a plot on easy terms for a 5-year lease, extendible indefinitely, but on terms that the lease rate is decided by the settlement management. The lessee should have no right to dispose of the property to anyone other than the management. Thus, if a lessee wants to move to some other place he can sell the property back to the management at a price fixed according to norms which will be laid down. This will eliminate speculation and consequent inflation in land prices. It will also create opportunities for poor people to find a place of employment and permanent settlement.

This paper is essentially a mathematical model of a self-sustaining settlement, in which an attempt has been made to produce the basic requirements of living from the settlement, and also to produce enough wealth from within the

settlement so that other essential requirements can be procured from outside. This approach is contrary to the normal present-day thinking in settlement planning where living, working, care-of-body-and-spirit, are looked at as separate compartments of activities, and provided for accordingly. Gradually the separation has become so much that one has to travel a long distance before one can get to a place of either living, or working, or recreation, etc.

This is evident in all metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Bombay, and Calcutta, and to a lesser degree in smaller towns which are themselves becoming satellites of bigger cities. The problems of living, transportation and servicing have become so concentrated and magnified that any mistake or mishap at one place adversely affects a large population which has no control over the mistake. Things have become incomprehensible. For example, people in Delhi suffer from gastro-enteritis every year through no fault of their own but because of an over-centralization of supply of water and handling sewerage.

In this paper an attempt has been made to create small self-sustaining, comprehensible; controllable settlements which have a universal validity. It would be wrong to think that they have no place in the cities. Indeed, if they are established in the cities, most of the problems which are the product of over concentration will be automatically solved. Such settlements can be started in a new city like Chandigarh where there is still plenty of space for such an experiment. It could overcome the problems of Gowala Colonies and Labour Colonies which are being created in isolation and which are a big burden on our resources. Such settlements are exceptionally valid for experimentation by agricultural universities, where all expertise is available. Indeed the agricultural universities could become the pacesetters for universal adoption of this pattern of settlement, so that this study which is only a mathematical model can be suitably amended for practical application in numerous different locations and situations.

Search for roots

SATISH GUJRAL

IT is indeed ironical that the challenge to the validity of modern architecture is being made in terms that are strikingly similar to those modernism itself had posed before the ruling taste of the nineteenth century — a taste, that modernism asserted, had created a deep wedge between culture and society, between design and its source of nourishment, between architecture and everyday life — that from being a creation of feeling, this taste had reduced architecture to a labour that was enjoyed neither by its producer nor by its consumer.

That type of architecture, modernists declared, was not one that could perform architecture's historical role: that of reassuring man that his existence has meaning.

Modern architecture started with dreams of winning back the split of thought and feeling that had been created by the ruling taste — a taste that due to the inherent conflicts of its age had destroyed the true relationship between human thought and the world man lived in.

Modern architecture was a revolt against bourgeois mentality. The mentality of the self-made-man of the industrial society, who on one hand prided himself on his power of scientific thought, and on the other was too eager to borrow the 'devalued symbols' of history because his feelings would not allow him to adopt a new basis through corresponding assimilation of experience.

It is ironic to recall it now but modern architecture too had indeed

set out to restore the equilibrium between inner and outer reality. In fact one cannot really denounce modern architecture as a whole. The aims of the movement were indeed noble. What plagued the results it produced was the course of the industrial revolution: the revolution it had chosen to celebrate.

Industrialisation as it grew in magnitude destroyed the basic relationship between man and his place. Its mass production made man lose his respect for *things*. So long as things were made by man himself, they were spontaneously related to human labour and were meaningful and precious to man.

Industrialisation created a consumer society that 'used' things and threw them away. This reduced man to a 'user' who no longer had any identity with what surrounded him. Standardisation is in-built in the industrial culture, furthered by the indifference to local factors typical of rampant technology. It delinks people from locality and persuades them to adopt a synthetic environment independent of traditions, landscape and climate.

Having rejected the sense of continuity in the time dimension conferred by tradition, industrial culture forces man to expend his existence in place instead of time, by seeking a universal culture.

Modern architecture failed to recognise these inherent consequences of industrial culture. Instead it aligned itself to the industrial design, its production methods, and its technology thus alienating itself not only from time, tradition and place, but also from the very aims it had set out to achieve.

In total opposition to its original aims, modernism declared architecture as being a part of applied science rather than a form of art. This fundamentalist principle was articulated for it by Hannes Meyer in 1928. 'Everything in this world is a product of the formula (function, time, economy), all these things are therefore not works of art, all art is composition and therefore unfunctional, all life is function and therefore unartistic.'

The 'avant garde' modernists now went out of the way to reinforce their new faith. Architecture, they now believed, should represent itself, along with product design, as a rigorous and technocratic discipline; that is, it should cease to proclaim itself as architecture at all.

This liberal, technocratic intelligentsia, these intellectuals of design, felt that the field should immediately embrace the heuristic methods of operational research and ergonomics. It was in assimilation of these rationalist theories that the architectural schools were re-christened as 'Schools of Environmental Design'.

The 'politicised' theories of architecture reduced the whole matter to a question of satisfying measurable 'needs' by means of measurable 'resources'. Politicization of any idiom always results in widening the gap between man and the world, because the concern of politics is mainly with methods and tactics rather than content. It leaves the goals at a very vague stage of definition and tends to consider the tactics as a goal in itself.

These politicized theories intensified man's sense of loss of place, and as a reaction most people began to dream again of 'romantic' homes. Vulgar functionalism cannot satisfy man's emotional needs; in spite of its 'social' pretensions, it is inhuman and truly 'exclusive'.

Architecture, in all cases where it does more than fulfill the simplest physical needs, is never entirely determined by external conditions. These merely provide the framework: within that framework the architect disposes of a practically unlimited number of possibilities.

The kind of distortion of the objective world practised by painters and sculptors may quite obviously not be susceptible of application to architecture. But is it not a kind of distortion when architects ride rough-shod over, or subordinate to their own expressive needs, the specific content of their particular experience—tradition, architectural type, construction, material purpose, etc?

In a way, architecture even seemed to have a certain advantage over all the other arts. It is much easier for architecture as the articulation of interior and exterior space, to eliminate that element of remoteness that is attached to aesthetics. Pictorial arts, poetry and music one can ignore, but not space, not building. Architectural objects embody a mental process which is repeated in the mind of each person who sees and experiences them. Like theatre to which it is often allied, architecture offers a way to the total artistic experience. But, unlike theatre, it guarantees a certain permanence.

Towns, buildings and objects are an extension of the collective memory of the community and its individuals. Traditional buildings grow unconsciously out of an interaction of landscape, soil, climate materials and type of culture; just as a bird shapes its nest with its own body, so the traditional community shapes its habitat with the collective memory.

Tradition is a centripetal force which prevents both the committing of errors and individual divergences. It works in the over-all interaction between physical conditions, way of life and psychological needs towards a balance.

Architecture turns a community's cosmological view of the world into physical reality. At the same time the temporal order is linked with the mythical order. In the end there is complete affinity between the individual and the community, between thinking and place, between thought and feeling.

Modern architecture which had started to fill the gap between thought and feeling, allowed itself to become a negation of both. The menace represented by modern architecture, as it decays, lies in its lack of concrete quality. Even fear is acceptable so long as it has its understandable cause or it symbolizes something and so long as it is not cloaked in apparent order and well being.

The irrational fear in cities created by modern architecture grows out

of the meaninglessness of the environment to our reason and its incomprehensibility to our senses. It is this lack of meaning in our environment that weakens our personalities and psyches. A properly organized environment, full of significance, finds echoes in the measurements of body, memories of minds, expresses our relationship with the world, but at the same time reinforces our self-concept.

The problem of meaning in environment is related to the question of local (regional) character. This character cannot be achieved by making sentimental use of vernacular motifs but by giving a new interpretation to relatively consistent environmental factors, including the local architectural traditions.

In general, what is needed today are concrete environmental qualities and lay-outs which have a meaningful character in relation to the building task and the locality. In short we need an environment which may better satisfy man's need for 'orientation' and 'identification' than the abstract solutions offered by modern architecture. We could say that a new conception of space has to develop into a new conception of place.

Man cannot dwell in a building in which he cannot participate. It is this participation that provides him with identification and orientation necessary for the development of the sense of being in this world. As well as experiencing place, man needs to experience time. He has to reassure himself of his existence — here and now — and of how he fits into the time continuum.

The assurance of continuity is one of man's basic psychological needs. 'A house' said Bachelard, 'constitutes a body of images that give mankind proofs or illusions of stability.' Experience of place activates forgotten feelings in our mind and body. It awakens earlier levels of awareness which have retained images going back to man's biological past.

True art, whatever its medium, does not open to us the doors to the future, but links us to our past,

our roots. The basic essence of art in the psychological sense is thus not an awareness of the never before experienced but the reconstruction of the biological level of feeling. Great architecture embodies both nature and man, fauna and flora, land forms and human shapes, material and imagery, in all their archaic quality.

I may quote from Simon Weil's *The Need for Roots*. It is useless to try to turn away from the past and to think only of the future. It is a dangerous illusion even to think that it is possible. The opposition of future and past is nonsense. The future brings us nothing; it is we who, to build it, must give it everything; even our lives.

'But to give one must possess and we possess no other life, no other blood than the treasures of the past which we have inherited; digested, assimilated, and recreated.

'Of all the needs of the human spirit nothing is more vital than the past.'

How could one assimilate this inheritance? A sense of locality, of the past and traditions can only emerge from within. Estrangement and weakening of the sense of identity cannot be cured in a calculated way by means of conscious additives, whatever their origin. Ignoring this factor always results in creating the enemy within. Content ripped from form deforms, as happened with modernism.

We must resist the temptation of referring to aesthetic experts to hand down 'solutions'. Because, art, where free, remains true only to its hopelessly rational laws, whoever the artist and whatever he names his art. The 'solution', if any, is for architects to embody the imagery of an art, and not merely produce what is routine practice of design symbols and traditions.

I may conclude with a quotation from Siegfried Gieden: the prophet of modern architecture; 'One cannot be an architect these days without going through the needle eye of art. Art is the key to reality.'

Against professionalism

RAMESH MANANDHAR

MY ideas on education in Nepal started when I was drafted to Surkhet, in Far Western Nepal, as a part of my professional job in His Majesty's Government's 'Bhawan Bivag' (Department of Housing) in Kathmandu... At that time (and even now in some cases), going to a village from a city is a 'low status job' for unskilled and semi-skilled professionals. Many qualified professionals in Nepal held that they should stick to Kathmandu, formulate plans and projects to be implemented all over Nepal. I was then one of those who chose (or was forced to choose in those circumstances) to leave winter-cold-Kathmandu for warm-Surkhet.

Surkhet was then an emerging regional centre created by the regionalization policy of the government. The new town was called Bireन्द्रnagar after our present King Bireन्द्र. The King used to camp here once every two years and it so happened that my 'drafting' to Surkhet coincided with the King's proposed visit. I could see the preparation taking place, the government officials worrying about the incompleteness of some of their projects and their progress reports — 'Pragati Chart'. Gates were being made, one for each Government office, and the expenses on those were not questioned. Someone told me that expenses incurred during the King's visit is overlooked by the office of the auditor-general. Surkhet was as if preparing for a wedding.

Amongst these brisk activities, I noticed many small children from Jumla who had come down with their parents to spend about 4 months of winter in Surkhet to save themselves against the bitter cold of

Jumla. These children were deprived of education as they could neither fit in the regular classes of Jumla nor were they allowed to join classes in Surkhet where they were looked upon as 'aliens'. As an architect, I saw my limitations, but as an educator, I would be more useful. Hence, along with some of my colleagues, I ran a school for about 3 months under a tree for these kids. During the final ceremony, we distributed certificates so that they could continue their studies when they went back to Jumla. On that occasion, one of the kids said: 'We are far from you but we also want to be like you. If only we could get some help.'

These words have ever since been ringing inside me. And over the years, I have been critically examining whether our professional degrees and qualifications are really going to help them in their search for a better life. Today, I have come to the conclusion that the kind of professional degrees that we hold, the kind of professional training that we have will not help to realize the dreams of these children. In fact, we may only push their dreams farther from being realized. Let me explain.

It was in Surkhet that my professional expertise was challenged. I had a bachelor's degree in Architecture from Bombay University, and this means I had a professional expertise in design and building. What I saw in Surkhet was that ordinary people were struggling to satisfy their hunger first, while building was a common activity of many people. Although village people did not have any professional degree, they would build their own homes, repair them and maintain them. They were using local mate-

*Extracted from *IFDA Dossier* 47, May/June 1985.

rials and the house design, size and materials varied according to their individual budget and culture.

There was unity in diversity. There were, of course, skilled masons, carpenters etc., who had never undergone any formal training but perhaps learnt from their association with their seniors. They were doing very well. Even these skilled workers were engaged in farming which satisfied most of their food needs. Here, I could see that a person had many skills that were unnoticed by outsiders. They would use these skills whenever it was necessary. You could see all the villagers in the fields during the plantation and harvesting and also see them during the construction of community houses in off-peak season.

In my recent survey of a Magar village in Gorkha district, it was found that out of 24 families, about 16 families knew how to lay stone walls, 6 families knew carpentry and everybody knew about the management of house construction. This is in sharp contrast with the modern tendencies of getting certified as professionals after undergoing many many years of schooling and yet come to the field with very little knowledge about the actual handling of the tools and materials. Yet, we have called this form of education more important than the practice of 'learning by seeing and doing'. It is an irony today to see a carpenter who had undertaken 10 years of schooling and several years of vocational training to come out in the field still without command over his tools.

Today, they are competing with local village carpenters and tomorrow they will make carpentry a 15 years course. A simple logic will tell us that this is a waste of energy of the people and the resources of the nation. It is even more surprising to see many architects and engineers complete their professional degrees in architecture and building without having laid down a single course of brick in mud mortar which the rural people have known for centuries. Yet, they are the ones who hold high positions and reap the benefits of the modern system.

I am here reminded of my discussion with a very old 'master-builder' in Kathmandu who had designed and built hundreds of buildings in Kathmandu valley. It was a sorrowful message that modern engineers and architects who work only on paper did not listen to his experiences. He said: 'When there was trouble, they would accuse me, but when it was a success, they would get the credit. Why do people believe in 'Paper-Dragons' and not anymore in those who actually make the building possible? We used to build houses with the owners to suit their budget but now architects design buildings to suit their own fees.'

There were certainly problems in these buildings by people, but the villagers were engaged in trying to cope with them with their own means. In their situation, I could not see my conventional professional expertise of any meaningful use. Although I was called an 'expert' in architecture, I had no previous knowledge or experience of the village situation. My training was paper oriented and urban directed. It could not serve the rural masses of Nepal. Therefore, I had to question my professional expertise. When people could build their own houses mostly by themselves, why was there need for an architect who had undergone about 17 years of schooling, out of the context of the village culture? Could a poor country like Nepal afford me?... The professional degree is a 'mismatch'.

The Surkhet Town Planning Office, in which I worked, made it mandatory that people had to build houses according to the rules laid down by the office. This was aimed to bring uniformity in the townscape and promote a better Master Plan for Surkhet as envisioned by a senior planner, a professional. A blueprint for a house was sold at a cheap price for those who could not afford an architect or an engineer. This process immediately helped local draftsmen, technicians, engineers and architects to get more private jobs for themselves. But what it did was to ignore the capacity of ordinary people to design and build their own houses. Ordinary people became more dependent upon the professionals.

This practice of taking power away from the people and vesting it in the professionals is not only in Nepal but going on in many countries of the world. The result has not been rewarding and many problems have cropped up against the poor. Illich has summed it up: 'On the day Venezuela legislated the right of each citizen to 'housing' conceived of as a commodity, three quarters of all families found that their self-built dwellings were thereby degraded to the status of hovels. Furthermore — and this is the rub — self-building was not prejudiced. No houses could be legally started without the submission of an approved architect's plan.'¹

Seeing a very limited role for the professional architect in helping the poor people of Nepal, I went to spend another two years of my life in an academic environment that gave me a further qualification of a 'human settlement planner'. The awarding of this degree meant that I was qualified to undertake professional responsibilities for building in the environment of the Asian poor. With this added degree, I came back to Nepal to find that I had greater opportunities to work besides in an architectural office.

I also found that this added qualification imposed on me additional responsibilities. I was expected to earn a higher salary, get a high status job and provide many other facilities for myself, my family and friends...

This is what Gunnar Myrdal has described as a 'revolution of rising expectations'. In simple terms, when people see that there are more things, they want more... Equally, one can understand the rising expectations of uneducated landlords, Sahujis and farmers but one finds it difficult to excuse the educated professionals (who have used the taxpayers money in most cases) to pursue their 'rising expectations' at the cost of the masses. Does professionalism produce greed then?

In Australia, I was surprised, as well as shocked to discover two

1. Ivan Illich, *The right to useful unemployment and its professional enemies* (London: Marion Boyars, 1978):

Australias. One Australia, in which a large proportion of people lived, was pursuing the conventional educational activities of acquiring university degrees for high-tech jobs and pursuing a professional career to become eventually a regular industrial consumer. I also witnessed a second Australia (however not as clearly defined as the first one) known popularly as 'Alternative Australia'. In these communities, there were many categories of people, university drop-outs, young professionals, professors, single parents, hippies, unemployed youths etc. They were seriously questioning their industrial mode of consumeristic life-styles and questioning the conventional role of professionals in development...

The western democracy is tilted more in favour of 'expert opinion' instead of collective opinion and thus, great national decisions of life and death are made by technological elites (professionals), and both the Congress and the people at large retain the mere illusion of making the decisions which the theory of democracy supposes them to make.

Thus, the alternative people of Australia were trying to create their own habitat based on self-expression, creativity, love and freedom. In terms of architecture, they were trying to build their own houses, create their own furniture, decorate their own houses and vegetable gardens. In short, they were also becoming producers...

One of the interesting things that happened to me was my own involvement in their struggle to be 'free' and to be 'productive people' who were building in earth, and I happen to come from a country with a great cultural heritage of earth construction. I discovered that my professional career as a conventional architect was not useful for them, but I certainly had a role to act as a *facilitator* to provide them with opportunities of building in earth, learning and discovering about mud brick construction and roofing. We organized small workshops in mud construction that brought many ordinary people together to discuss and debate on these issues.

The Maryborough community, for example, came in to make and lay mud bricks while the workshop participants completed the mud brick roofing with a mud brick dome and vault. It is, here, that I learnt that when the conventional role of a professional is changed to a facilitator, many people could participate in their own building. I came to the conclusion that collective consciousness is far superior to individual consciousness... It is heartening to note that even the Ministry of Housing has realized that conventional housing programmes would not satisfy the demands for housing, and certainly, even less for the poorer section of the community...

The recognition of the Australian government towards people building their own environment has gone even further. At a 1983 ILO conference, Prime Minister Bob Hawke said that the structural unemployment of industrial countries cannot be fought only by increasing employment opportunities, although this may be necessary, but by 'reducing demand for employment'....

This Australian experience is of particular importance for us as we are marching towards a modern society with new ideas. Some of these ideas are mere copies of western models of development where professionals have relatively dominant positions. Our country may not have reached their stage, but in attempting to do so, we are clearly losing some of our traditional skilled people in various fields for good. This loss of skill is happening in other countries too and many reputed thinkers and historians like Lewis Mumford are worried: 'While the population of complex and technically superior machine has enormously increased during the last century, the technological pool has been actually lowered as one handicraft after another has disappeared. The maintenance of this variety has been one of the conditions of human prosperity....'²

It is not the intention of this paper to prove that professionals

have no role in development but what I have said so far that the current trends in professionalism have not been of substantial help to the rising number of poor people and that in a way these professions do not encourage the development by the people.³ The open hand given to the professionals is a product of the materialistic mode of development. In this process, where materials are valued more than the people, the professionals determine what kind of materials are more suited to the people. In fact, they determine what kind of life-style is best suited for them. The masses, on the other hand, accept that professionals will bring development ('Bikase Manche Aayo' a village saying in Nepal).

They may not, however, realize that the right for self-development is now expropriated from them.

On this point, Illich argued: 'Development has had the same effects in all societies: everyone has been enmeshed in a new web of dependence on commodities, factories, clinics, televisions, studios, think-tanks. To satisfy this dependence, more of the same must be produced: standardized engineered goods, designed for the future consumers, who will be trained by engineers agents to need what he or she is offered. These products — be they tangible goods or intangible services — constitute the industrial staple. Their imputed monetary value as a commodity is determined by state and market in varying proportions. Thus, different cultures become insipid residues of traditional styles of action, washed up in one world-wide waste-land: an arid terrain devastated by the machinery needed to produce and consume... the modernisation of poverty means that people are helpless to recognize evidence unless it has been certified by a professional.'

Professionalism may have been epidemic in industrial countries, but this disease is slowly catching up in poor countries. We have to become aware and take appropriate actions

2. Lewis Mumford, *The myth of the machine, the pentagon of power* (New York: Harcourt Brace, Jovanovich, 1964).

3. Guy Gran, *Development by people, citizen construction of a just world* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1983).

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RETAIL AND EXPORT OF HOME FURNISHINGS

now. When people could build their own houses themselves, it may be unwise to bring in an expensive professional (who is educated outside the village culture at the cost of the masses and who consumes a lot of resources like a western individual). B.P. Koirala was worried with this form of development: 'Now the population of the U.S. is only 6 per cent of world population. To maintain these 6 per cent in their present condition of affluence, the U.S. uses up between 30 and 35 per cent of world's natural resources. If China and India, while between them contain 60 per cent of the world population, try to plan their economies on the same model, there will not be enough resources available. So that model is not relevant by the very logic of it. And that model is very very inefficient ... The Nepali cultivator with limited input produces more rice per acre of land than you do. Then, there is the problem of wastage through consumption of fuel. Your economy is dependent on the consumption of fuel which is not unlimited. Unless you redesign your machine, I see a collapse of your system by the turn of the century.'⁴

We have to make more out of whatever we have. Most of what is available within Third World countries is their people and their local expertise. If we degrade those village experts as not modern, less efficient and then introduce modern machinery and its agents, the professionals, we will be treading a very expensive path in which we will not only lose our great cultural heritage but will become dependent and thus deprived of the opportunities to create and participate in self-development. B.P. Koirala borrows words of wisdom from Gandhi who said that any development that bypasses the villager is not development at all.

Let me elaborate this point further in the architectural profession. Today, Nepalese architects are bent on bringing modern technology of cement and steel in their architec-

ture. Although certain merits are found in these materials, the traditional mud, timber and stone are certainly not of inferior materials. Many times, they are far superior.⁵

These architects have completely ignored the rich cultural heritage of our traditional architecture. This is most evident in Kathmandu. The modern architecture of Kathmandu is in sharp contrast with the traditional one which relied on local materials and local know-how. The Newar architecture is so sophisticated that many tourists from all over the world wonder whether these could be real.

Here, I am reminded of one incident. After Australia, I came back to Nepal again to explore mud construction (as well as mud roofing) in rural areas of West Nepal. I was trying to build a small demonstration temple in mud and stone. It was in the school premises that we were building and hence the students came to see me digging earth. One of them remarked: 'This is not good, Sir. An engineer digging earth like an ordinary farmer! Please come and teach us. We lack teachers.'

I replied: 'If you help me in my work, I shall help you in your classes.'

The student again: 'But Sir, why are we in schools if not to get away from working on the land?'

This is a very important truth said by a kid of our present educational system. Children are led to believe that our education is provided so that one need not work on land anymore. This is how one degrades the farming profession. My ideas about professionalism is that there already exist a tremendous cadres of professional expertise with the village people. This must be realized as our most important resource and, therefore, this must be facilitated. The present professionals have undermined these 'native professionals' and instead subjected the

'native professionals' to hardship by imposing their own professional standards. I have, therefore, come to the conclusion that if the present professionals are to play important roles in development, then they should act as facilitators.

Today, it is often heard in Nepal that such and such project did not meet its stated objectives although the project may have the most qualified and expensive professional expatriate and highly trained Nepalese professionals and, of course, a big budget. Although it is true that there are many reasons for a project failure, I am inclined to think that the professionals are partly to blame.

They portray an image of a 'developer' to develop people as if they are objects, like when developing a land with services. They have failed to recognize that the centre of development is people themselves and, therefore, people's professional expertise is the foundation of all development on which further supports would be weak and short lived. This suggests the need to explore cultural dimensions of development in which people's tools, technology, know-how become the stepping stones for their development with their own efforts. An external professional may be able to facilitate these processes if they go back to land, live with the people and learn with them.

Such a professional, then, need not be a well trained American graduate but a village educated professional, one who understands the culture of the village; the potentials and its limitations and some knowledge about how to solve them locally by actually working with the people and participating in the change. Thus, a village educated professional will be most likely a villager himself. Because he is not expensive, we can have more of them. In fact, every village will have many village educated professionals who are farmers, educators, facilitators all combined into one. You may say, then, that he is not a professional anymore. I would agree. He will be a villager first and last but with a difference: a villager who is now self-reliant, more creative and more political.

4. An interview of B.P. Koirala reproduced by Bhola Chatterji, *B.P. Koirala, Portrait of a revolutionary* (New Delhi: Ankur Publishing House, 1982).

5. Ramesh Manadhar, 'Cement, steel or mud', *The Rising Nepal* (Kathmandu, 17 Sept. 1982); 'Mud brick roofs in developed countries', *The Rising Nepal* (June 1982); 'Mud, mud, glorious mud', *Development Forum* (October 1983).

Books

DOWN TO EARTH by Jean Dethier. Thames and Hudson, London, 1982.

IN the dry mountainous regions of Ladakh, large monastic fortresses have been built entirely of unbaked earth; similar constructions in the wet climes of Bhutan, are also of earth. Village houses in the deserts of Jaisalmer are low single-storey mud dwellings while houses in the desert city of Shibam in Yemen are eight storey skyscrapers made of mud. From a sultan's palace in Niger to a Zoroastrian sanctuary in Iran, from a 19th century chateau in Lyons, France, to an 18th century stadium in Lima, Peru — throughout Asia and Africa as well as parts of Europe and Latin America mud has been the predominant building material in history.

Today, however, little is known of such buildings, little recorded of their design or construction, little written of the lifestyles of their inhabitants. All we know is that over one half of humanity still lives, works and worships in buildings that utilize mud in one form or another.

But Jean Dethier's new book, *Down to Earth* attempts to place mud architecture in its proper perspective. The 200 page volume is a tribute to this wonder material, to its remarkable resilience and sculptural versatility.

In India we are today faced with a shortage of 40 million houses, a number that is expected to rise to 60 million in the year 2000. Building materials required to meet this demand are already in short supply. What little housing currently being built is of a poor quality workmanship and design. And although experts acknowledge that sophisticated technology cannot offer a housing solution little effort has been made in promoting localized traditions of building. Mud technology still remain largely neglected or ignored.

For most groups — government or private — whose primary interest is their own economic and political well-being mud is not a profitable material. The economic systems they advocate have only created industrial monopolies for the more expensive materials like steel and cement and thereby encouraged the growth of conventional architecture. Architects and contractors likewise, whose fees are calculated on a percentage of the building cost, do not find it in their interest to use a material as cheap as mud.

Even research on mud buildings is being carried out only by small decentralized groups working in isolation. Government agencies like ASTRA (Application of Science and Technology for Rural Areas) and CBRI (Central Building Research Institute) have developed several techniques for improved mud construction, even designed some low-cost

structures. But lacking the means of effectively dispersing their know-how, much of their work ends in project-reports or seminars. The few 'experiments' that do get built in 'adopted' villages stand forlorn and desolate, reminders of a failed or abandoned mission.

In striking contrast to the situation in India, government housing projects in Mauritania, Morocco and Algeria have created whole villages out of mud. Architects, engineers and sociologists who studied the architectural traditions of the areas and their capacity to absorb new technology, have built hundreds of simple low cost homes. Closer to home in China a dynamic mud housing programme allows nearly 10 million peasant families to move into new houses every year. The success of such projects depends largely on the improvement of traditional building technology and the establishment of small scale construction units in areas of need.

In India the ordinary brick wall and the concrete flat top have made a pervasive impact on the landscape of villages and towns. If indeed the new government wishes to effect the built environment positively its energies need to be directed towards recognizing a localized approach to building. And mud architecture as an active participant in the process can begin to reconcile us with the unique character of each region while at the same time providing a possible clue to the housing crisis.

Gautam Bhatia

CITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY edited by Gary Gappert and Richard V. Knight. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills/London/New Delhi, 1982.

JOURNAL OF ARTS AND IDEAS, No 7, April-June 1984. Editor G.P. Deshpande, Managing Editor Romi Khosla.

'CITIES in the 21st Century' presents a series of essays which deal with the future of the American city as seen by various authors drawn from the disciplines of economics, management science, future studies, political science, sociology, urban affairs, geography, and environmental psychology. Their writings are quite specific to the context of their own country and the problems of a post-affluent or advanced industrial society.

For an Indian audience the interest in this collection would be to see if certain trends in urban development, as identified in these essays, could serve as models for understanding the forces of change in our own cities. For example, Arthur Shostak, writing on 'Seven Scenarios of Urban

Change', identifies alternative urban scenarios that cities can choose from. These are classified according to certain underlying issues, and each scenario is discussed in detail.

Perhaps the most relevant section of the book for us is the one dealing with 'Forces of Transformation'. Here there is a discussion of some spatial consequences of different energy scenarios, some ways in which technological development is likely to influence cities, changes in management techniques brought about by the communications revolution causing transformation of the institutional environment of cities, issues associated with the gender identity of built environments and speculation about an androgynous city in the future.

That the general public is alienated from the expressions of contemporary architecture is a refrain being heard with increasing loudness. This special issue of the *Journal of Arts and Ideas* is a welcome attempt to present some theoretical notions as well as examples of contemporary Indian architecture which seek to reconcile the conflict between tradition and modernity and to discover a richer architectural language which is more accessible to a wider audience.

The article by Romi Khosla puts forward an analysis of architectural design as a search 'that simultaneously links the cultural associations of our times with the galloping aspirations towards a vast future.' He illustrates this search by examples of his own designed and built work. The examples are prefaced by an explanation of his architectural ideology, set against the backdrop of 'a redefinition of Modern Architecture.' He asserts that the majority of contemporary architecture has misinterpreted the fundamental principles and concerns of the revolutionary architecture of Europe in the 1920's which formed the basis for the emergence of the Modern Movement in architecture. What was then an effort to express in built form the struggle and excitement of creating a new society, has been carried forward in a superficial manner to find expression in a 'grim and awesome architecture' today. Furthermore, the Indian reality is a product of cultural forces different from those which generated the great modern buildings in the west. He identifies iconography as being the basis of our aesthetics, and thus an architecture which evokes images and associations is, to his mind, the true expression of our culture.

In another article, the painter and sculptor-turned-architect, Satish Gujral discusses the very same pre-occupations with Romi Khosla, and again the theoretical notions are exemplified by built work, in this case the Belgian Embassy complex designed by Gujral. Not having had any formal training as an architect, Gujral's reactions to the process of architectural design are certainly refreshing. He brings the sensitivity of the fine artist to transform the business of building so that architecture becomes a natural extension of painting and sculpture. The discussion covers a range of related topics, from architectural education to attitudes towards building materials, to trends in modern architecture. Photographs of the Belgian Embassy complex and some

drawings by the artist/architect form the visual backdrop to this discussion. The images presented certainly represent a radical departure from the box-like, rectilinear and emotionless architecture which we have got used to associating with modern buildings. It is the radical quality of the images which throws up the inevitable question about the larger social relevance of such an architecture. These two articles together leave a feeling that a complete pre-occupation with image-making and reduce architecture to an exercise in styling and packaging reminiscent of the best efforts of the advertising industry.

In contrast, the article by Robi Sularto Sastrowardoyo, an architect from Bali, presents a study of traditional Indonesian architecture which shows how buildings can be the product of socio-cultural and physical factors working together to reflect and reaffirm the valuational structure of a society. He writes, 'in Balinese traditional architecture, a house should fulfill certain conditions, amongst others: it should represent a microcosm harmonious with the macrocosm, its orientation should be distinct, the hierarchy of its spaces correct, the proportion of its measurements exact, the use of its materials appropriate, its correct ritual cycle observed, and ultimately the dwelling should be declared to be a living being which must be respected and regularly maintained.' Such an analysis confirms that architecture has to concern itself with more than technical virtuosity or image-making if we are to develop a language for contemporary architecture which is more comprehensible and is able to produce great buildings.

Dr. Alexei Gutnov, in his article on the city, puts forward an approach for studying the development of cities as constantly changing structures where the realities of every-day life refute the town planners assumptions at every step. His almost metaphysical explanation of the processes of city development is part of an attempt to formulate a general theory. His concern is that 'when we are on the threshold of the 21st century, many of our existing urban ideals are being seriously doubted. More and more conclusions confirm the negative aspects of urban civilisation such as environmental pollution, noise, dangers of transport, alienation from nature and loss of human scale.'

There is also a review of a book on the work of Charles Correa, the first such publication on an Indian architect's work. It is interesting to see how Correa has synthesised diverse elements from traditional Indian architecture and lessons learnt from the great masters of modern architecture like Le Corbusier and Louis Kahn; yet his designs respect the fundamental imperatives of the programme and show a marked concern for climate. A rich mix of ideas feed the designs and his buildings generally present a strong and clear image, which distinguishes his work from that of other contemporary Indian architects. This exposition of Correa's work forms a fitting closing piece to this special issue.

Ashish Ganju

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September 1985

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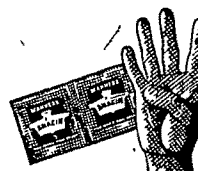


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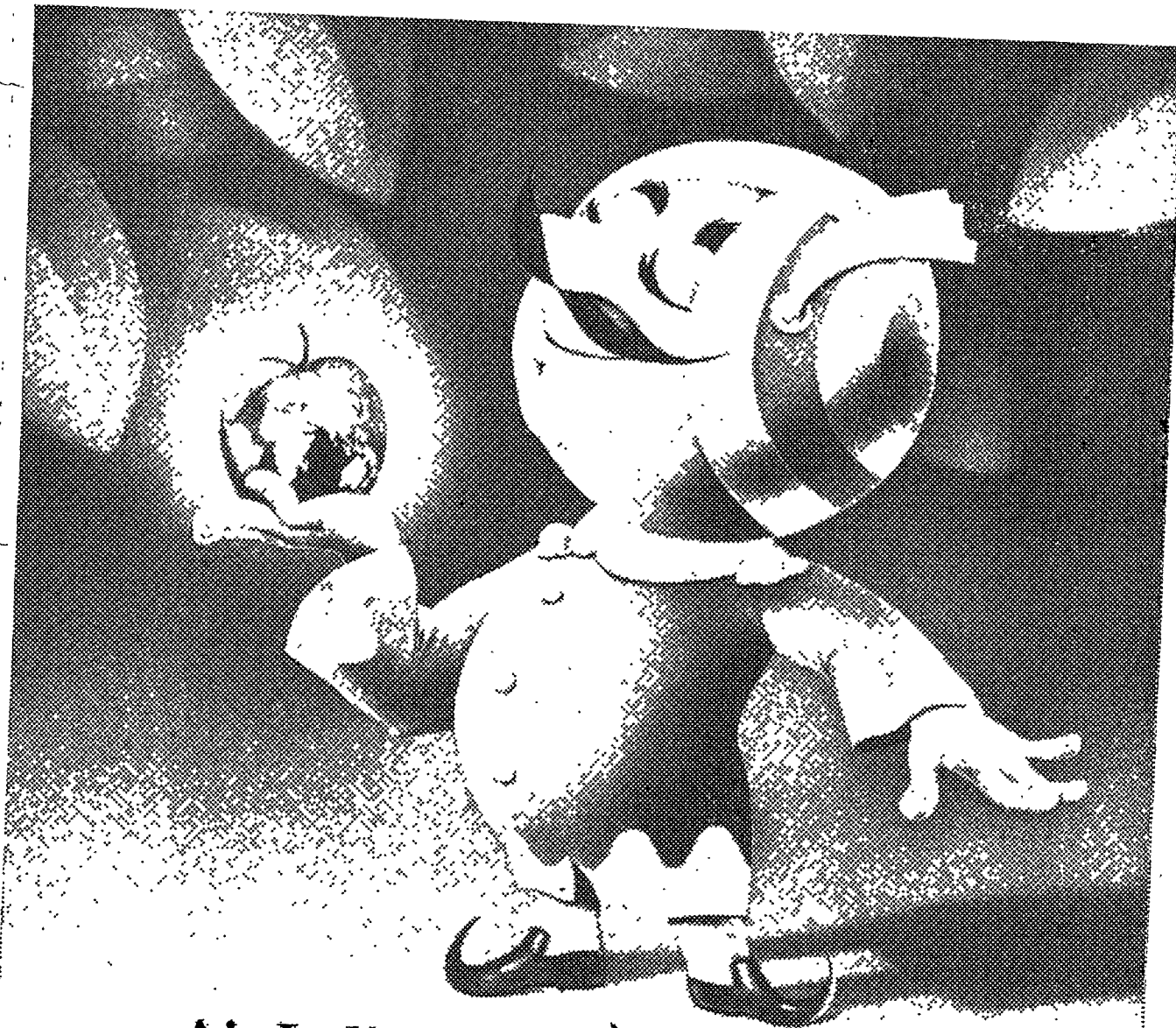
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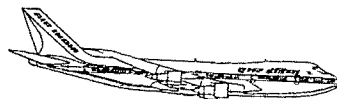
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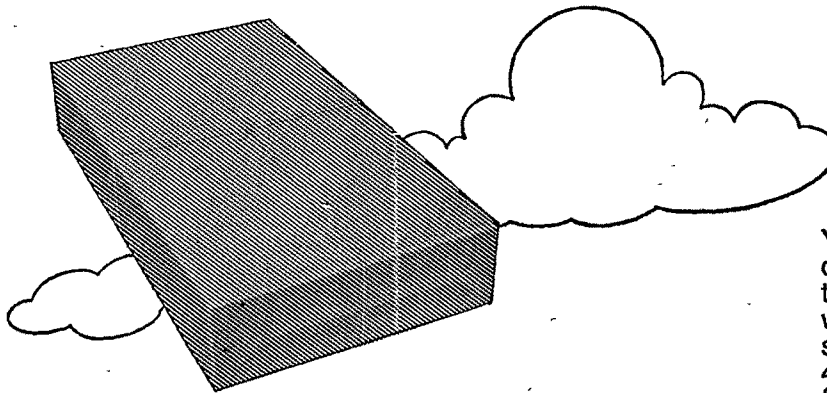
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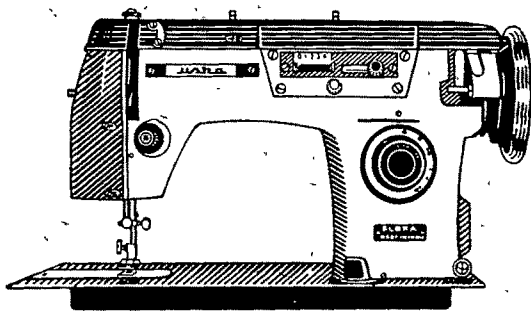
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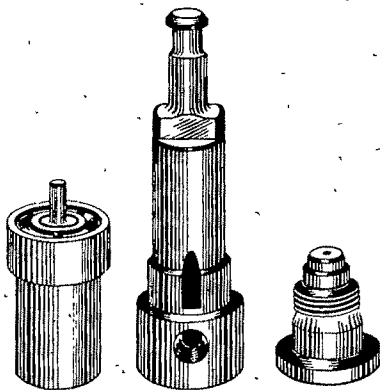
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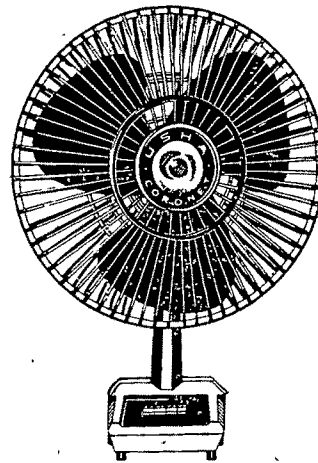
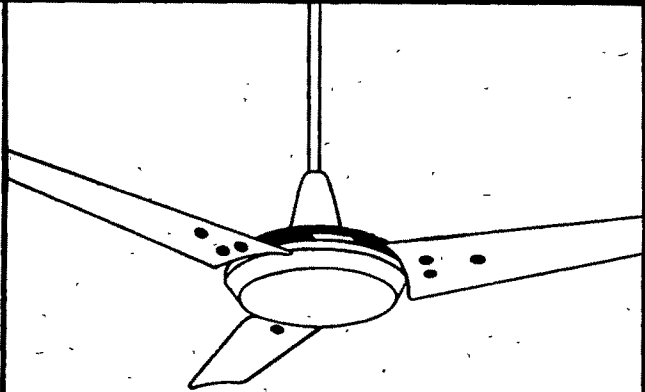
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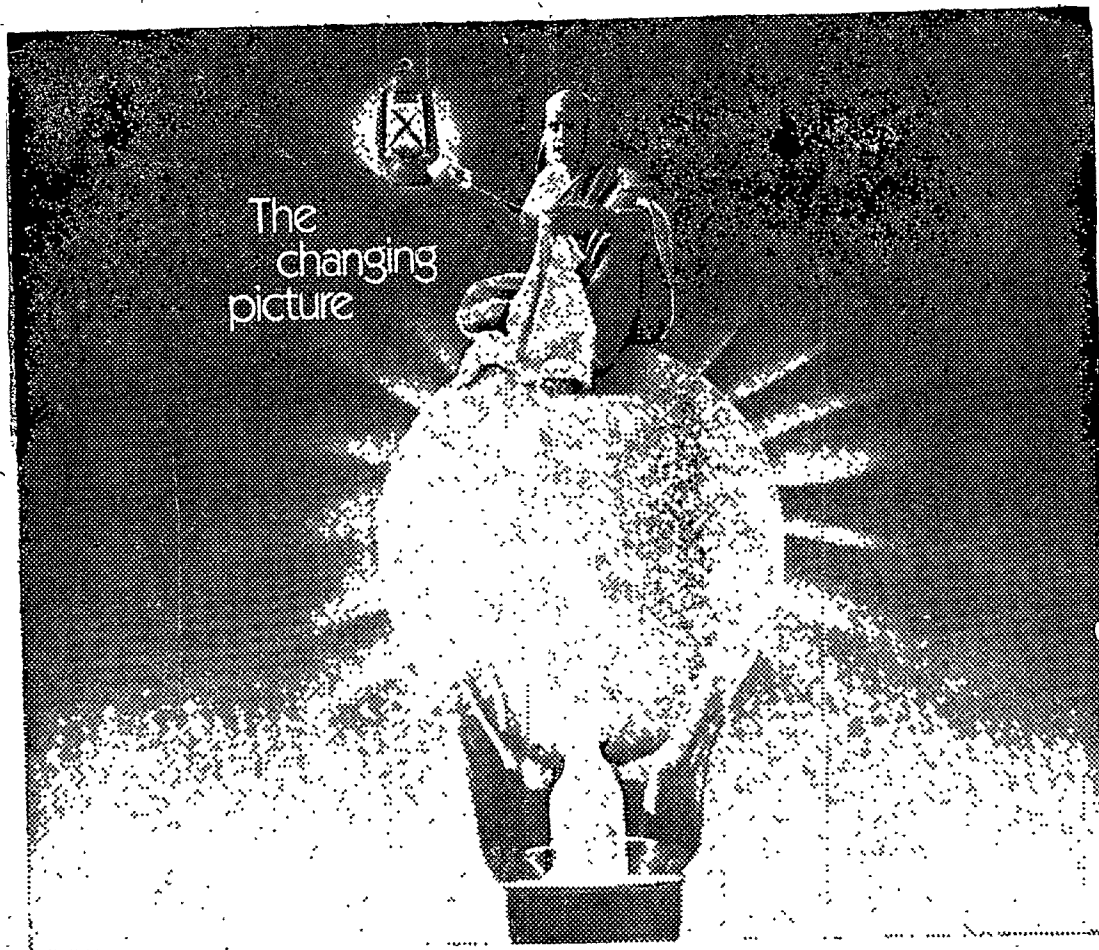
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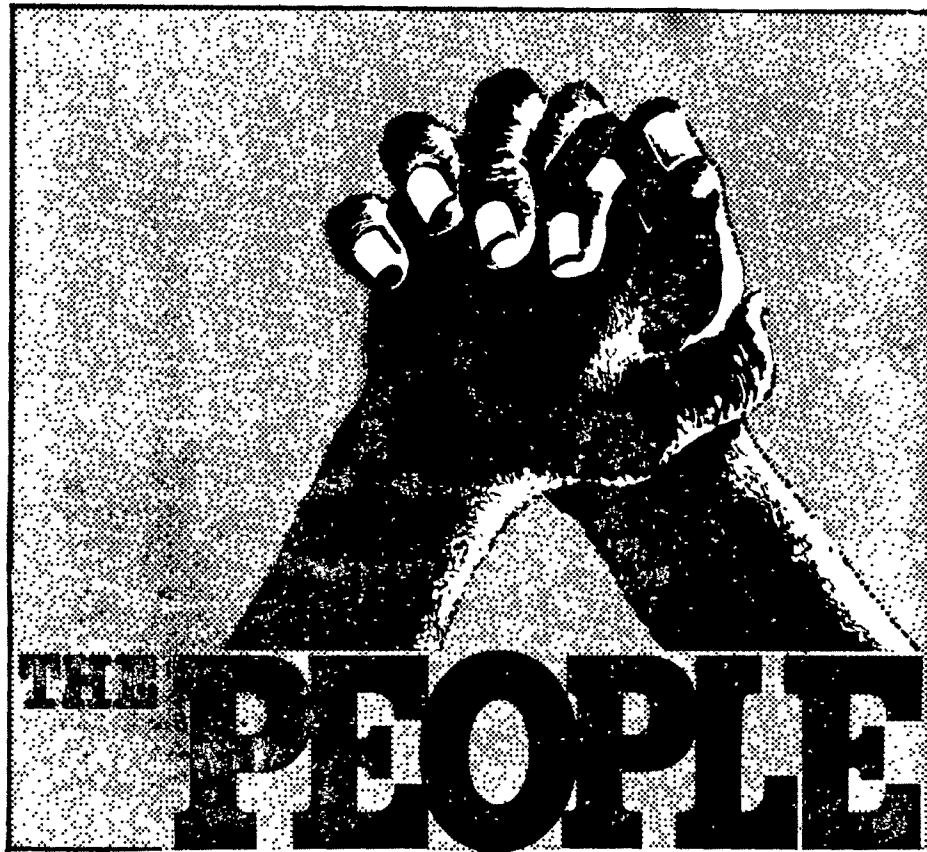
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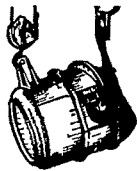


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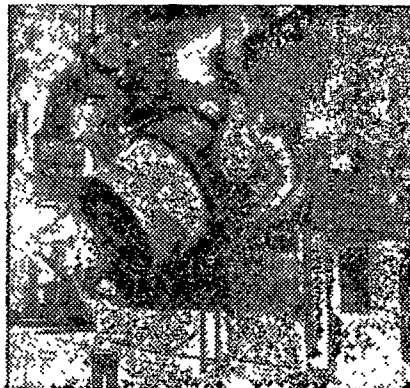
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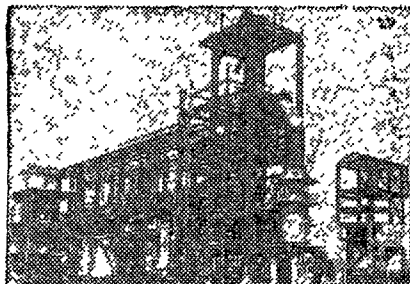
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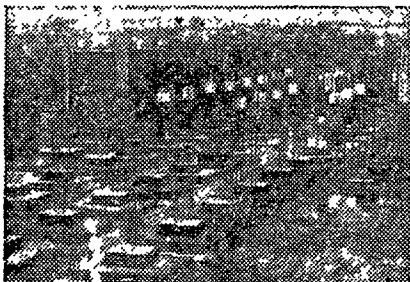
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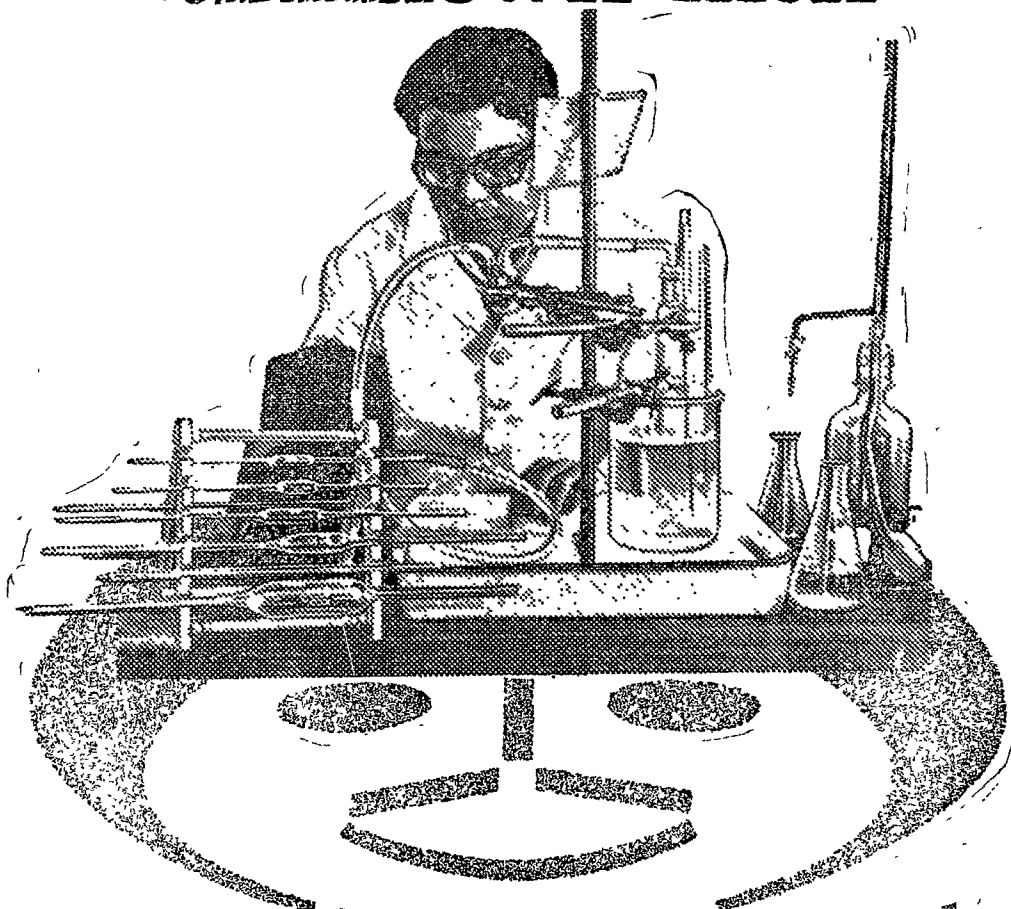
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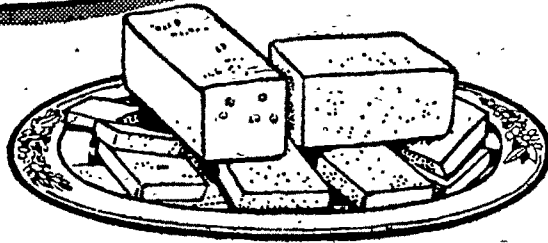
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NEXT MONTH: ISSUES WITHIN ISSUES

313

THE HINDUS AND THEIR ISMS

a symposium on

some of the complexities

of a dominant religion

symposium participants

THE PROBLEM

A short statement of the
issues involved

SYNDICATED MOKSHA?

Romila Thapar, Professor in Ancient
Indian History, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

THE PLURAL TRADITION

G.P. Deshpande, Professor at the School of International
Studies, Centre for East Asian Studies,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

NEO-NATIONALISM

Nirmal Mukarji, Research Professor at the Centre for Policy
Research and Ashis Banerjee, Visiting Fellow at the Centre
for Policy Research, Delhi

CONTEMPORARY RELEVANCE

Satish C. Kapur, formerly a Professor of
History and Philosophy of Science in France and the USA

THE NATIONAL ETHOS

C.B. Muthamma, formerly of the
Indian Foreign Service

ANTI-HUMAN

V.T. Rajshekar, Editor, 'Dalit Voice', Bangalore

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A select and relevant
bibliography compiled by M.S. Limaye

COVER

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The problem

WHEN religious communalisms grow, seeking fundamentalist colouring to make them conspicuous, it is becoming essential to clarify our minds on some of the issues that arise as a consequence. The Hindus, being the largest community numerically, have a special responsibility in this respect. They form the overwhelming majority, despite the disputes on who is included and who excluded under this omnibus term. To the minority communities, they appear like some vast mouth waiting to gobble them up. So, in defence, there is a continuous effort at many levels to accentuate differences, to increase the distance, all of which have dangerous consequences for the polity.

The Hindus, on the other hand, react by feeling aggrieved at such attitudes and assume a kind of self-righteous sulk which can be used by those amongst them who wish to compete in fundamentalism, irrespective of whether or not it can find a place in what goes by the label of Hinduism. Cries of 'Hinduism in danger' are being heard with greater frequency. Witness the reaction to the conversions in Meenakshipuram and elsewhere — events so infinitesimal in the given time-frame and numbers.

Therefore, the need to look at the historical, the philosophical background of what goes by Hinduism today as also the perceptions of those who are heir to its traditions and those who have suffered at its hands. The myth

has to be demarcated from the historical fact beginning with the very word itself.

For the vast population of untouchables and tribals, Hinduism's caste face is all that is revealed. It is a brutal face, one that has terrified generations of those it considers inferior, relegating them to the level of sub-human living. Giving ourselves a democratic constitution has not done much to change these fears, but it has made the articulation of the seething angers possible. These angers will have to be pacified, the wrongs righted, if we are to escape an unhealthy fragmentation of the society.

This is one of the most serious problems facing Hinduism. For, it is not enough to seek refuge and comfort in the large body of thought that has grown around the religion, thought which is inclusive in its wide ranging cogitation, assimilating from here, there and everywhere, when within it lies a rigid hierarchical structure of exclusivity, arrogant and demeaning to many within and others outside its fold. The confrontation will have to be resolved.

This issue of **Seminar** is an attempt at a clarification of some of these issues, a very small beginning, obviously, considering the vastness of the subject, both in scale and time.

Syndicated moksha?

ROMILA THAPAR

THE term Hinduism as we understand it today to describe a *particular religion* is modern, as also is the concept which it presupposes, both resulting from a series of choices made from a range of belief, ritual and practice which were collated into the creation of this religion. Unlike the Semitic religions (with which the comparison is often made), which began with a structure at a point in time and evolved largely in relation to and within that structure, Hinduism (and I use the word here in its contemporary meaning) has been largely a reaction to historical situations. The attempt to delineate a structure relates to each such situation. Comparisons with Semitic religions are not fortuitous since these have been catalysts in the search for a structure among contemporary 'Hindus'.

Whereas linear religions such as Islam and Christianity, and Buddhism, can be seen to change in a historical dimension both in terms of reacting to their original structure

and the interaction with the constituents of historical circumstances, such changes are more easily seen in individual 'Hindu' sects rather than in 'Hinduism' as a whole. This may be a reason for the general reluctance of scholars of 'Hinduism' to relate the manifestations of 'Hinduism' to their historical context and to changes in society.

The study of what is regarded as Hindu philosophy and texts and beliefs has been so emphasised as almost to ignore those who are the practitioners of these tenets, beliefs, rituals and ideas. Furthermore, the view has generally been from above, since the texts were earlier composed in Sanskrit and their interpreters were brahmans. But, precisely because 'Hinduism' is not a linear religion, it becomes necessary to look at the situation further down the social scale where the majority of its practitioners are located. The religious practices of the latter may differ from those at the upper levels of society to a degree considerably

greater than that of a uniform, centralised, monolithic religion.

Discussions on Hinduism tend to be confined to Hindu philosophy and theory. But the manifestation of a contemporary, resurgent, active movement, largely galvanised for political ends, provides a rather different focus to such discussions. It is with the projection of present-day popular ideas of Hinduism and of its past that this article forms a comment. The new Hinduism which is being currently propagated by the Sanghs, Parishads and Samajs is an attempt to restructure the indigenous religions as a monolithic, uniform religion, rather paralleling some of the features of Semitic religions. This seems to be a fundamental departure from the essentials of what may be called the indigenous 'Hindu' religions. Its form is not only in many ways alien to the earlier culture of India but equally disturbing is the uniformity which it seeks to impose on the variety of 'Hindu' religions.

My attempt here is to look at some of the significant directions taken by various 'Hindu' sects which have an historical dimension and try and relate these to social change. The study of what is regarded as 'Hindu' philosophy and thought has its own importance but is not of central concern to this article. The manifestation of religion in the daily routine of life draws more heavily on social sources than on the philosophical.

Religions such as Buddhism or Islam or Christianity do diversify into sects but this diversification retains a particular reference point — the historical founder and the teachings embodied generally in a single sacred text. The area of discourse among the sects in these religions is tied to the dogma, tenets and theology as enunciated in the beginning. They see themselves as part of the historical process of the unfolding of the single religion even though they may have broken away from the mainstream.

'Hindu' sects generally had a distinct and independent origin related to their particular founder or cult. Only at a later stage, and if re-

quired, were attempts made to try and assimilate some of these sects into the dominant sects through the amalgamation of new deities as manifestations of the older ones and by incorporating some of their mythology, ritual and custom. Subordinate sects sought to improve their status by a similar incorporation from the dominant sects if they were in a position to do so.

What has survived over the centuries is not a single, monolithic religion but a diversity of religious sects which we today have put together under a uniform name. The collation of these religious groups is defined as 'Hinduism' even though the religious reference points of such groups might be quite distinct. There was a time when 'Hinduism' was a convenient general label among some scholars for studying the different indigenous religious expressions. This was when it was claimed that anything from atheism to animism could legitimately be regarded as part of 'Hinduism'. Today the new Hindus would look upon atheists and animists with suspicion and contempt. The term 'Hinduism' is now being used in a different sense.

Hinduism as defined in contemporary parlance is a collation of beliefs, rites and practices consciously selected from those of the past, interpreted in a contemporary idiom in the last couple of centuries and the selection conditioned by historical circumstances. This is not to suggest that religions with a linear growth are superior to what may apparently be an ahistorical religion, but rather to emphasise the difference between the two.

In a strict sense, a reference to 'Hinduism' would require a more precise definition of the particular variety referred to — Brahmanism, Brahmo-Samaj, Arya-Samaj, Shaiva Siddhanta, Bhakti, Tantricism or whatever. Present day 'Hinduism', therefore, cannot be seen as an evolved form with a linear growth historically from Harappan through Vedic, Puranic and Bhakti forms, although it may carry elements of these. In this it differs from Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity.

Its origin has no distinct point in time (the *Vedas* were regarded as the foundation until the discovery of the Indus Civilisation in the 1920s when its origin was then pushed back), no historically attested founder, no text associated with the founder, all of which gives it an element of ahistoricity. This of course makes it easier to reinterpret if not to recreate a religion afresh as and when required.

Many of these features, absent in the religion as a whole, do however exist among the various sects which are sought to be included under the umbrella-label of 'Hinduism' which makes them historical entities. But, then, not all these sects would accept certain rites, beliefs and practices as essential. Animal sacrifice and libations of alcohol would be essential to some but anathema to others among the sects which the census labels as 'Hindu'. The yardstick of the Semitic religions which has been the conscious and subconscious challenger in the modern recreation of 'Hinduism', would seem most inappropriate to an understanding of what existed before.

Historically, we know little for certain about the Harappan religion except for a possible fertility cult involving the worship of phallic symbols, a fire cult, perhaps a sacrificial ritual, all suggestive of an authoritative priesthood. The decipherment of the script will hopefully tell us more. The Vedic texts perhaps incorporate elements of this religion but emphasise the central role of the sacrificial ritual or *yajna* and include a gamut of deities. A substantial element of shamanism can also be noticed. The Vedic texts and the *Dharmashastras* (the codes of sacred and social duties) are said to constitute the norms for Brahmanism and the religious practices for the upper castes.

Brahmanism is differentiated from the subsequent religious groups by the use for the latter of the term Shramanism. The Buddhist and Jaina texts, the inscriptions of Ashoka, the description of India by Megasthenes and the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims in the first millennium A.D. all refer to two main

religious categories: the Brahmins and the Shramans.

The identity of the former is clear. The latter were those who were often in opposition to Brahmanism such as the Buddhists, Jainas, Ajivikas and a number of other sects associated with both renunciatory orders and a lay following, who explored areas of belief and practice different from the *Vedas* and *Dharma-shastras*. They often preached a system of universal ethics which spanned castes and communities. This differed from the tendency to segment religious practice by caste which was characteristic of Brahmanism. The segmenting of sects is of course common even among historically evolved religions but the breaking away still retains the historical imprint of the founder, the text and the institution.

Brahmanism was free of this. The differentiating of Brahmanistic practice for a particular caste makes it an essentially different kind of segmentation. It was this segmentation which some Shramanic religions opposed in their attempt to universalise their religious teaching. The hostility between Brahmanism and Shramanism was so acute that the grammarian Patanjali, when speaking of natural enemies and innate hostility refers to this characteristic of Brahmins and Shramans in the same category as the snake and the mongoose and the cat and the mouse. This indigenous view of the dichotomous religions of India is referred to even at the beginning of the second millennium A.D. in Arab sources which speak of the Brahmins and the Samaniya.

Brahmanism did maintain its identity and survived the centuries with fewer fundamental changes, particularly after the decline of Buddhism. This was in part because it was well-endowed with grants of land and items of wealth through extensive royal patronage, which in turn reinforced its claim to social superiority and enabled it further to emphasise its distance from other castes and their practices.

The extensive use of Sanskrit as the language of rituals and learning gave Brahmanism access to high political

office and proximity to the royal courts. This again supported its exclusive status. The use of a single language — Sanskrit — gave it a pan-Indian character, the wide geographical spread of which provided both mobility as well as a strengthening of its social identity.

The Bhakti tradition of the first millennium A.D. is sometimes traced to the *Bhagvad-Gita* and its message, which text although historically post-Buddhist, was interpolated into the earlier *Mahabharata*. The *Gita* moved away from the centrality of the sacrificial ritual and instead emphasised worship through devotion to the deity and selfless action projected as the need to act in accordance with one's *dharma*. Dharma now became the key concept.

This shift of emphasis provided the root in later times for the emergence of a number of Bhakti cults — Shaivite, Vaishnavite and others — which flourished from the mid-first millennium A.D. and provided the contours to much that is viewed as traditional 'Hinduism'. The Shiva Bhakti of the Pashupatas, the Alvars and Nayannars of the Tamil speaking areas, the Shaiva-Siddhanta and the Lingayatas, Jnaneshvara, Vallabhacharya, Mira, Chaitanya, Shankaradeva Basava, Vemana, Lalla, Tulsidasa and Tukaram, are often bunched together as part of the Bhakti stream.

In fact, there are variations among them which are significant and need to be pointed out. Some among these and similar teachers accepted the earlier style of worship and practice, others were hostile to the Brahmins and did not accept the Vedic tradition; some were non-caste and objected to caste distinctions and untouchability, whereas for others such distinctions were normal. A few felt that asceticism and renunciation were not a path to salvation whereas others were committed to these. Kabir and Nanak infused Sufi ideas into their teaching.

These major differences are rarely discussed and commented upon in modern popular writing which is anxiously searching for similarities

in the tradition. Some of the non-caste sects discouraged their members from going to temples or on pilgrimages and observing the essentials of the upper caste *dharma*. That these dissimilarities were to be expected and were in a sense their strength, is seldom argued.

The Bhakti sects were in some ways the inheritors of the Shramanic tradition. They arose at various times over a span of a thousand years in various parts of the sub-continent. They were specific in time, place and teacher but were limited by the language which they used. They did not evolve out of some original teaching or spread through conversion; rather, they arose as and when historical conditions were conducive to their growth often intermeshed with the need for particular castes to articulate their aspirations. Hence the variation in belief and practice and the lack of consciousness of an identity of religion across a sub-continental plane. Similarities were present in some cases but even these did not lead to a recognition of participation in a single religious movement.

With the growth of the Bhakti cults, the worship of the iconic image of the deity gained popularity, possibly influenced by the emphasis on the icon in Buddhism and Jainism. Whereas the Greek, Megasthenes, does not refer to images at all, the later Chinese and Arab accounts make icons a major feature of the indigenous religions.

This was also the period which saw the currency of the Shakta sects and Tantric rituals. Regarded by some as the resurgence of an indigenous belief associated with subordinate social groups (gradually becoming powerful), it was clearly popular at every level of society including the royal courts. The attempt in recent decades to sweep it under the carpet or to give a respectable 'gloss' to its rituals is largely because of the embarrassment these might cause to middle-class Indians heavily influenced by Christian puritanism and somewhat titillated in imagining erroneously that Tantric rituals consist essentially of pornographic performances. That there has been little effort to investigate

and understand such cults derives also from the attempt to define 'Hinduism' as Brahmanism or upper caste rituals and such cults were alien to traditional Brahmanism.

Another noticeable manifestation of indigenous religion is what has recently been euphemistically called 'folk Hinduism' — the religion of the untouchables, tribals and other groups at the lower end of the social scale. This is characterised by a predominance of the worship of goddesses and spirits represented symbolically and often aniconically and with rituals performed by non-brahman priests for a variety of reasons, not least among them being that since the offerings and libations consisted of meat and alcohol they would be regarded as polluting by brahmans. Needless to say, such groups would not be able to afford the costly donations required of a brahmanical *yajna*. For the upper caste 'Hindus' these groups were (and often still are) regarded as 'mlecchas' or impure and certainly not a part of their own religious identity (however insistently the Registrar-General of the census or politicians may try to include them as such!).

The sects included in the honeycomb of what has been called 'Hinduism' were multiple and ranged from animistic spirit cults to others based on subtle philosophic concepts. They were oriented towards the tribe, the caste and the profession. The social identity of each was strongly imprinted on its religious observances.

This may in part explain why the word *dharma* became central to any understanding of this indigenous religion. It referred to the duties regarded as sacred which had to be performed in accordance with one's *varna*, *jati* and sect and which differed according to each of these. The constituents of *dharma* were conformity to ritual duties, social obligations and the norms of family and caste behaviour as stipulated in the *Dharmashastras*. It has been argued that there is an absence of theology as also of any ecclesiastical authority both of which again point to the difference between these religions and the Semitic. A major concern

was with ritual purity. The performance of sacred duty heavily enmeshed in social obligations was so important that absolute individual freedom only lay in renunciation.

But, the significance of *dharma* was that it demarcated sharply between the upper castes — the *dvi*ja or twice born — for whom it was the core of the religion and the rest of society who were regarded as neither requiring nor practising any *dharma*: they were *adharma* in every sense of the word. The attempt today in trying to redefine Hinduism is the implicit attempt to hold up the *dharma* of the *Dharmashastras* as essential to this religion even for those traditionally regarded as *adharma*.

'Hindu' missionary organisations, taking their cue from Christian missionaries are active among the adivasis, untouchables and economically backward communities, converting them to a 'Hinduism' as defined by the upper caste movements of the last two centuries. What is important to such missionaries is that these communities declare their support for the *dharma*. That this 'conversion' does little or nothing to change their status as adivasis, untouchables and so on and that they continue to be looked down upon by upper caste 'Hindus' is of course of little consequence.

The origin of the word 'Hindu' is geographical and related to those living in the Indian subcontinent. The Sindhu (Indus) river was referred to as Hindu by the Achaemenid Persians and as the Indos by the Greeks. The Arabs referred to it as al-Hind. Thus the inhabitants of al-Hind were the Hindi. The term Hindu was first used to mean all those who lived in al-Hind but were not Muslim. In terms of religious definition, reference is made in Persian sources to various Hindu religions, the earlier texts mentioning forty-two and the later ones listing at least five. Some descriptions suggest Brahmanism and others include a variety of sects.

'Hindu' became a term of administrative convenience when the rulers of Arab, Turkish, Afghan and Mughal origin — all Muslims, had

to differentiate between 'the believers' and the rest. Hindu therefore referred to the rest.

The first step towards the crystallisation of what we today call Hinduism was born in the consciousness of being the amorphous, undefined, subordinate, other. In a sense, this was a reversal of roles. Earlier, the term *mleccha* had been used by the upper caste Hindus to refer to the impure, amorphous rest. For the upper caste man, the Muslims were of the same category as the untouchables and certain low castes and all were debarred from entering the sanctum of the temple and the home. Now the upper castes were clubbed together with those beyond the social pale as 'Hindus'—undoubtedly a trauma for the upper castes.

This perhaps accounts in part for the absurd statements made by upper caste Hindus today that Hinduism in the last one thousand years has 'been through the most severe persecution that any religion in the world has ever undergone' (Karan Singh). Such statements can only come from those who conveniently forget that the last thousand years in the history of Hinduism has witnessed the establishment of the powerful Shankaracharya *mathas*, *ashramas* and similar institutions attempting to provide an ecclesiastical structure to strengthen conservatism; the powerful Dashnami and Bairagi religious orders; the popular cults of the Nathpanthis; the extremely significant sects of the major Bhakti teachers such as Tukaram, Namdeo, Vallabhacharya, Chaitanya, Dadoo and, Kabir, not to mention Nanak; and, more recently, the very influential Brāhmo and Arya Samaj.

In fact, many of the facets which are regarded today as essential to popular 'Hinduism' come from this period. The establishment of the sects which accompanied these developments often derived from wealthy patronage which accounted for the prosperity of the temples and institutions associated with these sects. Where then is the severe persecution? The last thousand years have seen the most assertive thrust of the major 'Hindu' sects.

If by persecution is meant the conversion of Hindus to Islam or Christianity, then it should be kept in mind that the majority of the conversions were from the lower castes and this is more a reflection on 'Hindu' society than on persecution. When the destroying of temples and the breaking of idols by Muslims is mentioned, and quite correctly, it should at the same time be stated that there were also some Muslim rulers — not excluding Aurangzeb — who gave substantial donations to Hindu sects and to individual brahmans. There was obviously more than just religious bigotry or religious tolerance involved in these actions.

Nor should it be forgotten that the temple as a source of wealth was exploited even by some 'Hindu' rulers. Those who refer to Mahmud of Ghazni's destruction of Hindu temples and the carrying away of their wealth generally prefer to ignore the statement of Kalhana in the *Rajatarangini* that Harshadeva, an eleventh century king of Kashmir and therefore a close contemporary of Mahmud, defiled and looted temples when he required funds for the State treasury. He appointed a special officer whose function was to seize the images and the wealth of temples. Given the opulence of most temples, such evidence may be forthcoming from other areas as well. The wealth stored in them required some to be walled in and defended almost like fortresses.

The European adoption of the term 'Hindu' gave it further currency as also the attempts of Catholic and Protestant Christian missionaries to convert the Hindu/Gentoo to Christianity. The pressure to convert, initially disassociated with European commercial activity, changed with the coming of British colonial power when, by the early nineteenth century, missionary activities were either surreptitiously or overtly, according to context, encouraged by the colonial authority. The impact both of missionary activity and Christian colonial power resulted in considerable soul searching on the part of those Indians who were close to this new historical experience.

One result was the emergence of a number of groups such as the Brahmo Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission, the Prarthana Samaj, the Arya Samaj, the Theosophical Society, the Divine Life Society, the Swaminarayan movement, et al., which gave greater currency to the term 'Hinduism'. Some of these were influenced by Christianity and Islam and some reacted against them; but even the latter were not immune from their imprint.

Embedded in many of these movements was the challenge from Christian missionaries. This was not merely at the level of conversions and religious debates. A more subtle form was the use made by Christian missions of the school, college and other educational institutions. Many who were attracted to these new 'Hindu' groups had at some point of their lives experienced Christian education. In the organisation of the educational institutions of the Arya Samaj, for example, the Christian missionary model plays an important role. The Shaiva Siddhanta Samaj in south India was inspired by the nineteenth century interpreter of Shaivism, Arumuga Navalar, who was roused to this vocation after translating the Bible into Tamil. The movement attracted middle-class Tamils seeking a cultural self-assertion and was to that degree a parallel to many of the other movements in the country. Added to this was the contribution of Orientalist scholars who interpreted the religious texts from their own viewpoint which furthered the notion of 'Hinduism'. The impact of Orientalism in creating the image of Indian, and particularly 'Hindu' culture, as projected in the nineteenth century, was considerable and religion was a major part of that image.

Those among these groups influenced by Christianity, attempted to defend, redefine and create 'Hinduism' on the model of the Christian religion. They sought for the equivalent of a monotheistic God, a Book, a Prophet or a Founder and congregational worship with an institutional organisation supporting it. The consciousness was again of creating as a reaction to being 'the other'; once again by a Semitic religion. The monotheistic God was

sought in the abstract notion of Brahma — the universal soul with which according to the *Upanishads* the individual soul or Atma seeks union and *moksha*; or else with the interpretation of the term *deva* or deity which in early English translations was rendered as God, suggesting a monotheistic God.

The worship of a single deity among many others is not strictly speaking monotheism, although attempts have been made by modern commentators to argue this. Unlike many of the earlier sects which were associated with a particular deity, some of these groups claimed to transcend deity and reach out to the Absolute, the Infinite, the Abstract. This was an attempt to transcend segmentary interests in an effort to attain a universalistic identity, but in social customs and ritual, caste distinctions were maintained between high and low.

The teaching of such sects drew on what they regarded as the core of the tradition: the Atma-Brahma relationship, the theory of action and rebirth (*karma* and *samsara*) and salvation lying in the union of the individual soul uniting with the All-soul. The Book was either the *Bhagvad-Gita* or the Vedic texts, especially the *Upanishads*. The Prophet being altogether alien could at best be substituted by the teacher-figure of Krishna in the *Gita*. But Krishna was neither a Prophet nor a Son of God.

Congregational worship became the channel for propagating these versions of Hinduism. The discarding of the image by both the Brahmo and Arya Samaj was like an allergic reaction. It was seen as a pollution of the original religion but, more likely, it was the jibe of idol worship which brought about this reaction.

Much of the sacred literature had been orally preserved and served a variety of social and religious ends. Some texts, secular in origin, were sacralised, such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Interpolations could be added as and when required, as for example, the *Gita*. This is a different attitude from the Semitic to the centrality of the Book or, for

that matter, from that of the Sikhs to the single, sacred text.

These new groups were in part the inheritors of the older tradition combining social aspirations with religious expression and establishing new sects. But at the same time they were trying to create a different kind of religion and gave currency to the term 'Hinduism'.

Traditional flexibility in juxtaposing sects as an idiom of social change as well as the basic concepts of religious expression now became problematic. In the absence of a single 'jealous' God, demanding complete and undiluted loyalty from the worshipper, there were instead multiple deities some of which survived over time and others which faded out.

Thus, the major Vedic deities, Indra, Mitra and Varuna, declined with the rise of the Shaiva and Vaishnava sects in the first millennium A.D. Shiva and Vishnu have remained major deities supported by various sects although not always in agreement with what the deities represent for them. This has not prevented the creation of fresh deities as has been witnessed in recent decades with the very popular worship in northern India of the goddess, Santoshi Ma.

The attitude to deity would in part explain the argument that it is not theology which is necessarily important in Hinduism but the mode of worship. The *yajna* was a carefully orchestrated performance of ritual with the meticulous ordering of every detail down to the correct pronunciation of the words constituting the *mantram*. Worship as part of Bhakti was different. The emphasis on oblation and sacrifice now transformed itself into devotion to the deity, sometimes even taken to the extreme of ritual suicide.

The deity was conceptualised in a variety of ways — abstract, aniconic, an image, an image elaborately sculpted and housed in an equally elaborate temple; and devotion could also be expressed in various ways. There was no requirement of uniformity in methods of worship or in who performed the ritual. There

was little ecclesiastical order involved and no centralised church.

The question of conversion therefore became unimportant. In its absence, sects grew through segmenting off or through assimilating other cults or amalgamating similar sects. The religious sect was also an avenue to caste mobility. Origin myths of middle and lower castes often maintain that the caste was originally of higher status but a lapse in the ritual or an unwitting act of pollution led to a loss of status.

Imitation of higher caste norms or the dropping of caste obligations would normally not be permitted unless justified by the creation of a new religious sect. The latter would initially be regarded with hostility by the conservative but if it became socially and economically powerful it could be accommodated.

The absence of conversion accounted for the absence of the distinction between the true follower and the infidel or pagan. Yet, distinctions of another kind were more relevant and sharply maintained, particularly in sects with a substantially upper caste following. These primarily excluded all those who were outside the social pale or the *mlecchas*, such as untouchables, tribals, foreigners, those observing the social mores of the foreigners and even upper castes who did not conform to *dharma* regulations. They were regarded as polluting because they performed neither the ritual duties nor the social duties required by the *dharma*.

It is often stated that one is born a Hindu, i.e., into a particular sect whose regulations are to be observed and cannot therefore be converted to Hinduism. In fact, the idea of conversion came about only after the nineteenth century groups became active and this was the occasion of some debate. Previously it was maintained that each sect had its own regulations, obligations and duties which often drew both on religious antecedents and social requirements. Gradually, if a sect acquired a large following cutting across castes, it tended to become a caste in itself. It would perhaps be more correct to speak of the Hindu religions (in the plural) rather than of 'Hinduism' (in the singular). Some would argue that

the correct term for the latter would be *sanatam dharma*.

There was one category of renunciatory orders which did include sects recruited from any caste. Some of these orders restricted themselves to recruiting only brahmins but, in the main, most of them recruited from a variety of castes. Although theoretically the latter were open to all, needless to say members of the first four if not the upper *varnas* were preferred. Open recruitment was possible because renunciators were expected to discard all social obligations and were regarded as being outside the rules of *dharma*. Renunciatory sects were generally not expected to maintain a caste identity.

Joining such an order was also in some cases the only legitimate form of dissent from social obligations. The multiplicity of renunciators in India has therefore to be viewed not merely as inspired by otherworldly aspirations but also with the nature of the links between social forms and dissent.

The Shramanic religions were similar to these sects in that they did recruit members from a range of castes although, as was the case also with Indian Islam, Indian Christianity and Sikhism, converts often retained their original caste identity, especially in the crucial social area of marriage connections. Among renunciators of the non-Shramanic persuasion, the Dasnami order founded by Shankaracharya and the Vaishnava Bairagis were among the better known.

Sects batted on patronage, whether royal or other. Even the renunciatory orders were not averse to accepting wealth which ensured them material comforts as is evident from the many centres of such orders scattered across the Indian landscape both in the past as well as now.

In addition to economic wealth, these institutions had access to political power and the intertwining of politics and religion was obvious. The real texture of Indian social history in the second millennium A.D. has been by-passed by the obsessive concern with Hindu-Muslim relations to the exclusion of the more

pertinent investigation of how politics and religion at the level of the sects, interacted.

Caste identities, economic wealth and access to power also contributed to providing the edge to sectarian rivalries and conflicts. Initially, in areas where Shaiva sects were establishing themselves, there was a persecution of Buddhists and Jainas. Such actions go back to Mihirakula and Shashanka who in the northern India of the mid-first millennium A.D. are remembered for their destruction of Buddhist monasteries and the killing of monks. Early in the second millennium A.D., Karnataka witnessed the destruction of Jaina temples and images by Shaivite groups and the sixteenth century records a similar series of events in Kakatiya territory.

The rewriting of texts to correct the prevailing perspective from Jaina to Vaishnava was a less gruesome form of religious intolerance. Once the Buddhists and Jainas were virtually out of the way, hostility among the 'Hindu' Sects was not unknown, even between ascetic groups as is evident from the pitched battles between the Dasnamis and the Bairagis over the question of precedence at the Kumbh Mela.

Such antagonism was not that of the 'Hindu' against another religion but that of a particular sect expressing its hostility towards others. Tolerance and non-violence therefore have to be seen at the level of sectarian aggression. It is true that there were no Inquisitions. This was partly because dissent was channelled out into a separate sect which, if it became a renunciatory order, lost much of its social sting. In addition, there was no centralised church whose supremacy was endangered. However, social subordination, justified by theories of pollution, replaced to some degree the inequities of an authoritarian church.

Religious violence is not alien to 'Hinduism' despite the nineteenth century myth that the 'Hindus' are by instinct and religion a non-violent people. One suspects that the genesis of this myth was in the requirements of nationalism stress-

sing the spiritual superiority of Indian culture of which non-violence was treated as a component.

Non-violence as a central tenet of behaviour and morality was first developed in the Shramanic tradition, that of Buddhism and Jainism. These were the religions which not only were allowed to decline but were persecuted in some parts of the country. One is often struck by how different the message of the *Gita* would have been and how very much closer to non-violence if Gautama Buddha had been the charioteer of Arjuna instead of Krishna. Gandhiji's concern with *ahimsa* is more correctly traced to the Jaina imprint on the culture of Kathiawar.

Not that the Shramanic tradition prevented violence; but at least it was the central issue in the ethics of Buddhism and Jainism and was emphasised to a far greater degree than in the ethics of most 'Hindu' sects. Sporadic killing apart, even the violence involved in the regular burning of Hindu brides in the city of Delhi as of late, does not elicit any threat against the perpetrators of such violence from the spokesmen of 'Hinduism'.

Sectarian institutions acted as networks across geographical areas, but their reach was limited except in the case of the major institutions such as those of the Dasnamis, the Bairagis or the Nathpanthis. Bhakti as a religious manifestation was predominant throughout the sub-continent by the seventeenth century; yet, curiously, there was little attempt to link these movements to forge a single religion. This was partly because each tradition used a different language which imposed geographical limits and also because there was no ecclesiastical organisation to integrate this development.

The Radha-Krishna cult began gradually to take on a wider geographical identity with the expansion of Hindi and the encouraging of pilgrimages in the second millennium A.D. The closest to ecclesiastical organisations were the institutions associated with the Shankaracharya movement but these were concerned basically with Brahmanism. The Bhakti com-

munities saw themselves as self-sufficient, with religious forms closely tied to local requirements.

The emergence of Bhakti has been linked by some scholars to what have been described as the feudalising tendencies of the time and parallels have been drawn between the loyalty of the peasant to the feudal lord being comparable to the devotion of worshippers to the deity. The Bhakti emphasis on salvation through devotion to a deity and through the idea of *karma* and *samsara* was a convenient ideology for keeping subordinate groups under control. It was argued that they might suffer in this life, but by observing the *dharma* they would benefit in their next birth. The onus of responsibility was therefore on the individual and not on society. The emphasis on individual salvation gave the individual an importance which was absent in real life and therefore served to keep him quiescent.

Interestingly, this explanation of *karma* is not acceptable to lower caste groups who, while supporting the notion of rebirth do not accept that they were born low because of misdemeanours in a previous birth. Common as is the belief in *karma* and *samsara* among many sects, it did not however preclude the growth at a popular level of the concepts of heaven and hell as is evident in the widespread references to *svarga* and *naraka*, going back to early times.

The segregation of social communities in worship and religious belief and the absence of an over-arching ecclesiastical structure demanding conformity, was characteristic of the Hindu religions. Attempts at such structures were made by the founders of certain sects, the most prominent being Shankaracharya when orders were established and institutions founded in the four corners of the sub-continent (the *piithas*). In part, these were in imitation of the Buddhist *sangha* and the recognition of the strength of an institutional base.

But, such movements were rooted in caste differentiations unlike the Buddhists who in theory did not restrict the availability of their religion to any caste. The 'Hindu' insti-

tutions therefore came largely to cater to the upper castes and legislated (on the occasions when they did) for these castes. The lower castes were not important to such institutions which were not concerned with the beliefs, rituals and practices of such castes so long as they remained in a subordinate status.

The segregation of social communities and the relatively distinct religious identity of these led to the possibility of each group leading a comparatively separate existence. The clash could only come in the competition for patronage. This might partially explain the notion of tolerance with which the nineteenth century invested indigenous Indian religions. However, sectarian rivalries did exist, sometimes taking a violent form, thereby projecting a different picture of the past.

Nor did this lack of tolerance grow with the coming of Islam. Curiously, although some Islamic popular belief was internalised, particularly among sects identified with the socially less privileged, there was little overt interest in Islamic theology on the part of Hindu groups, except in a marginal way, by some scholars maintaining that certain aspects of philosophy in the second millennium A.D. might be traced to Islamic influence. There are few major studies of Islam in Sanskrit or in the regional languages until much later. References to the Muslims were either to Turushkas/Turks in the early sources, which was the correct ethnic identity of the earlier rulers, or more generally to *mlecchas*.

Similarly, the more learned among Muslim authors such as Abu'l Fazl merely give resumes of Brahmanism when they come to the details of some of the Hindu religions which they speak of, since this was socially the most prestigious of them all. There is little detail of the other sects except in a very generalised way. Abu'l Fazl refers to the strife among the various indigenous religions which he attributes to diversity in language as well as the resistance of Hindus to discuss their religions with foreigners!

The confrontation of Islam and Hinduism is often posed as two

monolithic religions, face-to-face. In fact, for Islam the Indian experience must have been extremely bewildering, since there was no recognisable ecclesiastical authority or structure among the Hindus as a whole to which Islam could address itself. It faced a large variety of belief systems of which the most noticeable common feature to Islam was idol-worship — but even this was by no means uniform. Hence the frequency with which references are made preferentially to castes and ethnic communities — Rajputs, Jats, Zamindars, etc. — in the context of the indigenous religions and only on a very generalised scale to the Hindus.

It is often said that the Hindus must have been upset at seeing Turkish and Mongol soldiers in their heavy boots trampling the floors of their temples. The question is, which Hindus? For, the same temple now entered by *mleccha* soldiers was open only to a few upper caste Hindus and its sanctum was in any case barred to the majority of the population consisting of the indigenous *mleccha*, and their feelings were immaterial to the caste Hindus who had worshipped at these temples. The trauma was therefore more in the nature of the polluting of the temple rather than the confrontation with another religion.

I have tried to argue that if one is attempting to understand 'Hinduism' in history, then one has to see it so far as possible in its indigenous form. The distinction between the two traditions of Brahmanism and Shramanism are significant. These separate identities were carefully maintained. In the eyes of the former the latter were obviously inferior and for this one has only to look at texts of Brahman authorship of the second millennium A.D. referring to monks and mendicants. Brahmanism also maintained a distinction between itself and other 'Hindu' religious sects such as those associated with the Bhakti and the Shakta movements which, although not Shramanic in the strictest sense, were nevertheless the inheritors of some of that tradition.

The separateness of the two was forced to narrow, though not to

amalgamate, from time to time when historical situations demanded it. A formal closeness was imposed on them by the coming of Islam and the categorisation for the first time of all indigenous cults as Hindu where Hindu carried the connotation of 'the other'. Islam had a more extended dialogue with the inheritors of the Shramanic tradition but was relatively silent with Brahmanism.

A further crisis came with the arrival of Christianity riding on the powerful wave of colonialism. In the projected superiority of the Semitic religions, it was once again the 'Hindus' who were regarded as 'the other' and this again included both the Brahmanic and the Shramanic traditions. This time the dialogue was with Brahmanism. Of the social groups most closely associated with power, the upper castes were the genitors of the new middle class and among them, initially, brahmins were significant.

Inevitably, the Brahmanical base of what was seen as the new Hinduism was unavoidable. But merged into it were various bits and pieces from upper caste belief and ritual with one eye on the Christian and Islamic models. Its close links with certain nationalist opinion gave to many of these neo-Hindu movements a political edge which remains recognisable even today. It is this development which was the parent to the present-day Syndicated Hinduism which is being pushed forward as the sole claimant to the inheritance of indigenous Indian religion.

It goes without saying that if Indian society is changing, then its religious expressions must also undergo change. But, the direction of this change is perhaps alarming. The emergence of a powerful middle class with urban moorings reach to the rural rich was useful to bring into new form, monolithic, Hinduism to serve its new role in the guise of a new religion, an effort to create a large class out of the voiceless.

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down in society there would be the attraction of upward mobility through a new religious movement. But the latter, having forsaken some of their ideologies of non-caste religious sects, would have to accept the *dharma* of the powerful but remain subordinate. A change in this direction would introduce new problems as it has already begun to do. In wishing away the weaknesses of the old, one does not want to bring in the predictable disasters of the new.

Perhaps the major asset of what we call 'Hinduism' of the pre-modern period was that it was not a uniform monolithic religion, but a juxtaposition of flexible religious sects. This flexibility was its strength and its distinguishing feature, allowing the existence even of non-caste, anti-Vedic groups disavowing the injunctions of the *Dharmashastras*, which nevertheless had to be included within the definition of what has been called 'Hinduism'.

The weakening or disappearance of such dissenting groups within the framework of at least religious expression would be a considerable loss. If Syndicated Hinduism could simultaneously do away with social hierarchies, this might mitigate its lack of flexibility. But the scramble to use it politically merely results in the realignment of castes.

Syndicated Hinduism draws largely on Brahmanical texts, the *Gita* and Vedantic thought, accepts some aspects of the *Dharmashastras* and attempts to present a modern, reformed religion. It ends up inevitably as a garbled form of Brahmanism with a motley of 'values' drawn from other sources, such as bringing in elements of individual salvation from the Bhakti tradition, and some Puranic rituals. Its contradictions are many. The call to unite under Hinduism as a political identity is anachronistic.

Social and economic inequality is a given fundamental of Brahmanism and whether one approves or disapproves of it, it was an established point of view. To propagate this associated with this view is to insist that it is an egalitarian

philosophy is hardly acceptable. Some religions like Islam are in theory egalitarian. Others like Buddhism restrict equality to the moral and ethical spheres of life. The major religions after all arose and evolved in societies and in periods when inequality was a fact of life and the social function of these religions was not to change this but to try and ameliorate the reality for those who found it harsh and abrasive.

Further, as a proselytising religion, Syndicated Hinduism cannot accept a multiplicity of religious manifestations as being equally important: clearly, some selected beliefs, rituals and practices will have to be regarded as essential and therefore more significant. This is a major departure from the traditional position. Who does the selecting and from what sources and to what purpose also becomes a matter of considerable significance.

Another factor of increasing importance to this Syndicated Hinduism is the 'Hindu' diaspora. 'Hindu' communities settled outside India experience a sense of cultural insecurity since they are minority communities, frequently in a largely Islamic or Christian society as in the Gulf or in Europe, North America or the Caribbean. Their search is often for sects which will support their new enterprise or, better still, a form of Hinduism parallel to Christianity and with an idiom comprehensible to Christians which they can teach their children (preferably, we are told, through Hindu schools and video films). Such communities with their particular requirements and their not inconsequential financial support will also provide the basis for the institutions and the ecclesia of Syndicated Hinduism.

The importance of this 'diaspora' is clearly reflected not only in the social links between those in India and those abroad supporting the new Hinduism, but also in the growing frequency with which the Sanghs, Parishads and Samajs hold their meetings abroad and seek the support and 'conversion' of the affluent. The aspect of conversion is new and aggressive, both among 'native-born' Indians and whites.

This is not to be confused with the guru-cult in affluent societies where there is little attempt to convert people to Hinduism, but rather to suggest to them methods of 'self-realisation' irrespective of their religious affiliations.

The creation of this Syndicated Hinduism for purposes more political than religious, and mainly supportive of the ambitions of a new social class, has been a long process in the last hundred years or so and is now coming more clearly into focus. Whatever political justification there might have been for this development, as a form of nationalist assertion under British rule, no longer exists. Social groups in the past have expressed their aspirations in part by creating new religious sects.

The emergence of Syndicated Hinduism is different both in scale and scope and is not restricted to the creation of a new sect but a new religious form seeking to encapsulate all the earlier sects. The sheer scale as well as the motivation call for considerable caution. Syndicated Hinduism claims to be re-establishing the Hinduism of pre-modern times: in fact it is only establishing itself and in the process distorting the historical and cultural dimensions of the indigenous religions and divesting them of the nuances and variety which was a major source of their enrichment.

Attempts to insist on its legitimacy increase the distance between it and the indigenous religious articulations of Indian civilisation and invest it with the ingredients of a dangerous fundamentalism. With each aggressive stance, based on the false alarm of Hinduism in danger (as when five hundred 'Hindu' untouchables were converted to Islam at Meenakshipuram out of a population of five hundred million 'Hindus'), this Syndicated Hinduism forces a particular identity on all those who are now technically called Hindus. But not all would wish to participate in this identity. There is something to be said for attempting to comprehend the real religious expression of Indian civilisation before it is crushed beneath the wheels of this new Juggernaut bandwagon.

The plural tradition

G. P. DESHPANDE

THIS is the subject of a volume, not quite of an article. It is even doubtful if it is a subject at all. Are there any people who can be in a systematic and scientific manner described as the Hindus? It is true, of course, that nearly eighty per cent of the people of India are identified as Hindus. It is quite possible that they identify themselves as Hindus. In the journalistic parlance of this country, they constitute the 'majority community'. Is it a case of simulated identity which over the years has been accepted as the true identity? What is the relationship between the so-called Hinduism and the so-called Hindus? It is evident that all such questions would require a volume or even a series of volumes to answer satisfactorily, if at all.

There is no word such as Hindu in Sanskrit, the language in which the texts of 'Hinduism' have been written. The *Vedas* or the *Upanishads* or even the *Bhagavad Gita* do not mention the Hindus. To the best of our knowledge, none of the *Smritis* or the *Puranas* talk of Hindu Dharma or the Hindus. Let it be said at the outset that the problem here is not one of semantics. It is not a terminological issue either. The etymology of the word Hindu is well-known. It was a middle-eastern pronunciation of Sindhu (the Indus). By a simple transfer of meaning it came to stand for the people who shared a culture that

the Arabs and the Persians saw on their first landing here. The Ionian Greeks before them had done the same.

The term majority community has survived in our pop talk on the communal situation largely because the 'minority' faiths are relatively easy to define and describe. Raymond Williams in his *Culture and Society* has said that there is no such thing as masses; it is only a way of looking at people. The 'majority community' syndrome is also a way of looking at people. There are Hindus in the sense that there has developed in this country a way of looking at people or the so-called 'majority-community' as the Hindus.

This was perhaps not the case before colonialism came to this country. It is doubtful if the people talked of themselves as Hindus before the colonial phase in our history. Jnaneshwar writing in the 13th century did not talk of the Hindus. The Bhakti poetry in Maharashtra talked of the Bhagavata Dharma, never of the Hindu Dharma. Was the Bhagavata Dharma identical to the Hindu Dharma as we understand it today? The Vaishnavas might say yes, the Saivas would doubt that. Narsi Mehta, the favourite poet of Gandhi (we mean the Mahatma) talked of Vaishnava jana and not of the Hindu jana. Who then is the Hindu? The

Hindu identity is clearly a product of the colonial phase of our history.

The colonial phase also popularised the term 'Arya'. Are the Hindus then Aryas? The answer is no again. The term Aryas to denote the entire 'majority community' is also an invention of the colonial phase. In Sanskrit plays, the title *Aryaputra* (the son of an *Arya*) is reserved for the hero or usually the ruling gentry. Not everyone was an *Arya*. He could not have been.

This kind of semantic ambiguity extends to the concept of *dharma* as well. The term is usually translated as religion. So current has this incorrect usage become that it has gained an unwarranted legitimacy. The Sanskrit *dharma* (or Pali *dharma*) is not religion. In Sanskrit (and Pali and Ardhamagadhi as well) *dharma* meant social order (*Dharmayati asau sa dharmah*); it also meant duty, obligation. It also meant civilisation and culture. It is interesting to note the last-mentioned meaning of *dharma*; for that might explain why the line dividing culture and faith is so thin in our society.

Those who talk of secularism in Indian society, at any rate quite a few of them, tend to view the contradiction between Church and State and/or culture in India more or less in the same terms as it is in European history, consequently drawing very commendable but basically unrealistic conclusions. But that is an aside. The basic fact that we have to grasp is that the *dharma* is not religion and Hinduism, if one has to use that term, is a *dharma*.

II

The confusing picture was made worse by modern sociology. This science never seemed to come to grips with the systems like Hinduism or Buddhism or Confucianism and the like. They are not religions in the same sense as the religions of the book, i.e., Judaism, Christianity or Islam are. They were loose structures. The European missionaries who encountered Africa and Asia saw the problem as one: between paganism and civilisation. That is how the idea of the white man's burden got cur-

ency. Modern sociology has never got over the early Jesuit influence. India and the Hindus, their society, languages and culture are not subjects of history. They are subjects of anthropology. Science relating to Indian (like African) languages is called anthropological linguistics. Why should the study of French be linguistics and that of Punjabi or Tamil be anthropological linguistics? But apparently it is so.

The Americans have now come up with ethnomusicology as well. This means that a Beethoven symphony is music, but the *Raga Malhara* is ethnomusic. Why? The answer probably is that the white man's achievements are history, ours anthropology. This neat distinction follows the 'orientalist' tradition-of the last three centuries. One social science which has not rid itself of 'orientalism' is sociology. More often than not, a brown sociologist is merely repeating a white orientalist perspective. Studies in the Indian languages and the arts have predictably followed this approach.

Orientalism was not, however, the only approach to Indian reality; or more specifically to the study of the Hindus. The other framework was provided by Weber. It is by no means certain if one could speak of a Weberian understanding of eastern religions. In other words, it is possible to argue that Weber was not interested in Eastern religions as much as he was in understanding the phenomenon of capitalism. Having worked out a model of protestant ethic and the rise of capitalism, it was of some interest for him to look at societies which did not develop a protestant ethic and presumably, therefore, capitalism. In other words, Weber's concern was neither India nor China (and their religions) but, rather, capitalism. He could not have been interested in a very major way in the civilisations of India and China except in terms of explaining why they did not produce capitalism.

Modern Indian sociology does not swear by Marx. A Marxist sociologist would be for most sociologists in this country a contradiction in terms. In any case, Marx's writing on Asia and India in parti-

cular are a part of his over-all project which was to understand capitalism and to explain how and why a given mode of production was replaced by the other, better one.

The net result is that in the traditions of western scholarship, eastern religions do not have an autonomous status. Modern Indian scholarship has accepted that position without much questioning or so it would appear. Had it not been so, but for notable exceptions like Kosambi, Chattopadhyaya, Romila Thapar or Sharad Patil who incidentally all belong to the Marxist school, there have not been attempts to delineate historically various strands in 'Hindu' society and thought. They demonstrated that there is no one, monolithic 'Hinduism'.

III

It is perhaps the first thing to know about the Hindus that they are not one people in any sense of the term. For several centuries, the people here did not identify themselves in terms of 'Hinduism' at all. Either a given *varna* or *jati* determined their identity or (and at times in addition to it) it was determined by the area or region they came from. A Punjabi Hindu had more in common with a Punjabi Muslim or Sikh than he had with, shall we say, a Tamil or a Bengali Hindu.

But, that was not all. Before Islam came to India, people identified themselves in terms of philosophical schools. There were many schools of Indian philosophy, nine in all, which related to each other in terms of whether they recognised the authority of the *Vedas* or not. Six out of the nine Indian Darshanas rejected the *Vedas*.

Indian philosophy has not been divided (and it is doubtful if it is worthwhile to do so) into idealism and materialism. Rather, the division has been between Vaidik and Avaidik (accepting or rejecting the authority of the *Vedas*). The *Lokayatikas* were materialists. But more importantly they were Avaidik. Their attack on the *Vedas* and Brahmanism was so fierce that the *Ramayana* singled them out for a particularly vicious attack. It said that

the *Lokayatikas*, gifted as they were of sharp intellect, talked utter nonsense:

Buddhimanvikshakim prapya
nirartham pravadanti te.

This example has been cited here to make the point that what we call Hinduism is in fact a name of a plurality of traditions and often these traditions were at conflict with each other. We are familiar with the term plural society. It is wrongly used because quite often in this pluralism, the Hindu tradition is taken to be one, indivisible whole.

One is reasonably certain, that even the Indian Muslims do not represent a monolith. In terms of religion perhaps they can be described as belonging to one definable tradition (we do not know enough of Islam to be able to say anything on that) But in terms of social practice they are as divided as anybody else. Hinduism does not even have a theological unity. It is a mosaic of different and at times conflicting philosophical schools and religious practices. There is also an element of struggle between various traditions which are now commonly grouped together as Hinduism.

In this sense, 'Hinduism' is a tolerant religion. This does not mean that the Hindus are tolerant. This needs to be stated because quite often the intolerance of the Hindus is equated with intolerance of Hinduism. It is like saying that since the imperialists were Christians, Christianity is imperialist. 'Hinduism' as a system of beliefs, as a conglomeration of the schools of philosophy is indeed tolerant. So is Buddhism or Jainism or Confucianism. The religious systems which do not have a holy book or a church are naturally tolerant. Hinduism has no book. It is absurd to give to the *Gita* the status of the *Qoran* or the Bible. It is far more realistic and also historically accurate to accept that India does not have a *Qoran* or a Bible. And it is just as well.

IV.

Sometime during the British occupation of India, a transformation occurred. May be, as a part of

proving ourselves to be equals of the Europeans, an attempt was made to show Indian civilisation to be a uniform, structured whole. It was perhaps necessary for a growing anti-imperialist movement to do so. After all, it is important to demonstrate to the people of this country that their past was glorious so that they build a glorious present. The so-called Hindu identity got its moorings then. At the same time, it was a Brahmanical tradition, a Vedic tradition which got itself projected as the *only* tradition in the 'Hindus'.

As we have tried to argue, it was far from the historical reality. In an imitation of the conquerors, we tried to show our 'religion' to be comparable to theirs. They had a church, and a holy book. We tried to do the same. The *Bhagvad Gita* acquired its disproportionate importance in the 19th century. It became the holy book. Swami Dayanand and his Arya Samaj tried to give the same status to the *Vedas*.

It is a strange phenomenon. To give the *Gita* or the *Upanishads* a religious status is like worshipping Aristotle or Plato. It cannot be done, should not be done. They are philosophical treatises and as such are everybody's property. There is nothing typically 'Hindu' about them. There is no reason why an Indian Muslim cannot comment upon the *Upanishads*. After all, a European Christian comments on Aristotle's ethics or Plato's dialogues. A plural culture will emerge only when that starts happening. In commenting upon Plato, a modern day European does not cease to be a Christian. An Indian Muslim commentator on the *Upanishads* will not cease to be a Muslim. He will simply establish a relationship (critical or contradictory or whatever) with a philosophical tradition as against a religious tradition.

In any event, what the Muslims and the Christians do is relatively a small matter. What the 'Hindu' is doing to his tradition is frightful. He is transforming what in fact is a religious and philosophical system

into a theology, into something comparable to Semitic religions. The modern Hindu is losing the sense of plurality of his tradition. That also explains his increasing intolerance. He is making the so-called Hinduism into what the West thought *was* Hinduism — a closed system dominated by a priestly class.

There is an element of decay in this. What we need is perhaps the resurgence of the plural tradition; because that was the strength of Indian civilisation. The so-called minorities and the so-called majority both have lost sight of this plurality. For the average Indian Muslim, history begins in the eighth century A.D. For the Sikh now it begins in the fifteenth or thereabouts. For the so-called Hindu it begins in the nineteenth! For, what he calls his ancient glory is in fact a small packet put together in the nineteenth century.

We in India are busy making our history as short and as uniform and monolithic as possible. The 'Hindu' is caught in an illusion that this small packet would give him strength. Little does he realise that communalism or even fundamentalism has not made the Indian Muslim stronger. The Hindu packet of the nineteenth century is going to be equally debilitating if not more so. It was necessary to talk a certain language in the nineteenth century. Historically, one has to take a kind view of those who talked that language. But to continue with it on the threshold of the 21st century contributes to weakness. In every communal riot, the so-called Hindu loses more in terms of spirit than the Muslim or whosoever is the victim of that riot.

It might sound strange to conclude this short essay on the note that the real strength of 'the Hindus' lies in not being a monolithic, one-book, one-church religion. They are a civilisation and must return to a civilisational consciousness. A civilisation is never made of a single tradition. It is a tragedy of the modern 'Hindu' that he does not see that the so-called strength of non-Hindus is an illusion and that he can never be stronger by pursuing that illusion himself.

Neo-nationalism

NIRMAL MUKARJI and ASHIS BANERJEE

INDIA stands today amidst a complex flow of social, cultural and political cross currents. Generalisations about any of these can be made only after due caution is taken to indicate that such generalisations are abstractions from a larger reality that is inherently complex. This short essay is concerned about the rise of a pan-Indian Hindu assertiveness in recent years. It also seeks to establish a possible linkage between this social phenomenon and the new economic strategy ushered in by the Congress government at the Centre. What will be variously referred to below as the Hindu phenomenon or the Hindu idea has little to do with Hinduism as a religion. Hindus as a social and political entity are the subject of the present discussion.

Broadly speaking, there are four levels at which the rise of the Hindu phenomenon may be explained. These four levels, as will be noticed, also constitute four types of social explanation. The first is that Hindu society, which for many centuries felt subjugated at the hands of other rulers, is gradually coming to realise its supremacy at the ideological as well as the political level. The roots of this realisation can be traced back to the freedom movement.

The achievement of freedom was in many ways a fulfilment of the desire for supremacy, but Hindu society *qua* Hindu society was channelised into constructive State and nation building activities by the national leadership within a broadly secular framework. The secular framework did not arise as in the West by a gradual displacement of the role of the church from the social and political life of the people

and the emergence of the sovereign State as the most dominant institution which could command the primary loyalty of the people.

In India the secular State existed parallel to other religio-social forms of authority and even in competition with it. The gradual galvanising of the Hindu political identity, and the reluctance (or inability) of the political leadership to direct its energies has created conditions where the Hindu phenomenon is beginning to appropriate the State. This process is supported by two possibly separable ideological currents — an anti-colonial 'cultural revolution' and the more blanket form of anti-westernism, and even anti-modernism.

The second level relies less on the ideational aspect and more on the sociological. Briefly stated, it explains the Hindu phenomenon as a consequence of the widening of the social base of political Hinduism in the post-independence period. The argument is as follows. Political Hinduism was sustained for long years, even in the post-independence period, by a narrow base of upper-caste Hindus. That is why it remained weak in relation to the secular nationalist stream, as is evidenced by the small percentage of votes secured by the Jana Sangh which was avowedly a party which represented the Hindu idea.

After independence, the backward castes or, more appropriately, the 'Other Backward Classes', benefited from the first phase of land reforms and arrived on the political and economic scene. Over the years, large sections among these groups have entered the socio-religious spheres which were hitherto pre-

serves of the caste-Hindus and have developed stakes in them. This phenomenon may be described loosely as a process of political Sanskritisation. Large scale mobilisations such as the *Ektamata Yagna* and the *Ram Janam Bhoomi Andolan*, it is submitted, would probably not be possible without the active participation of this enlarged base.

Further, the closing of ranks between the upper castes and the backward castes at this level seeks external enemies in order to consolidate its somewhat uneasy solidarity. Hindu communalism directed against minorities and scheduled castes is one of the outcomes.

The third level of explanation lies at the border of the religio-cultural and the political. This sees the Hindu phenomenon as the aggregate of many reactive thrusts of Hindu society at local levels against what is perceived to be the organised nature of the minorities. At the ideological level it takes forms represented by slogans like 'Hindu society is under threat.'

Thus, it organises against conversions in Meenakshipuram, or Vijaywada or Rajasthan and more recently in Bahraich district of U.P., of scheduled castes/tribes to Islam. It also expresses alarm at pockets of Muslim prosperity arising out of moneys earned in the Gulf and the possible use of such money to enter trades which were preserves of the Hindu traders as in Moradabad, or to buy urban property in areas which were exclusively Hindu.

Further, it expresses fears about Christian influence in the North-East and the growing influence of the Church in the South and tribal areas of U.P., Bihar and M.P. Foreign links of Christian missionaries are cited as an additional cause of apprehension. In the Terai areas of U.P., Hindus have felt the need to generate organised expression in the form of religious processions etc., to resist the influence not so much of Sikhism as of the Sikh settlers in these areas.

Neo-Buddhist influence among the scheduled castes is also the object of much Hindu resentment. All these

are seen as challenges to and erosions of Hindu supremacy in a Hindu dominant State. Curiously, the policy of reservations for the scheduled castes and tribes is also seen as a similar threat. The two major movements of the eighties, in Assam and Punjab, where the communal issue has taken prominence over the regional one (less so in Assam), have given a new shape to this aggregative/reactive Hindu political phenomenon. They have been able to merge the idea of 'Hindu society under threat' and the idea of 'nation in danger' into what, for our present purpose, we may call Hindu neo-nationalism.

The fourth level of explanation is a straightforward political one. In abstract terms we may describe it as the succumbing of the secular State to the pressure of the parallel social authority as represented by this Hindu neo-nationalism. In more concrete terms, it arises from Mrs. Gandhi's penchant, particularly in the last years of her rule, to woo Hindu society for purposes of political power. This brought a possibly dormant and disaggregate Hindu phenomenon out into the open.

The Congress Party rode upon the phenomenon after Mrs. Gandhi's assassination and used it effectively during the campaign for the eighth general election, and less successfully, during the campaign for Assembly elections to eight States held subsequently. It cannot be said with certainty that the present government has either got off that wave or even desires to do so.

For the present essay, the second and the fourth levels of explanation are more relevant though the other two will provide an essential backdrop. The questions that we have posed to ourselves are: what is the social basis of the new political economy? And how does it relate to the imperatives of national political power in the present phase? The answer to these two questions is as follows.

In the second explanation, it was argued that the basis of political Hinduism has widened because of the coming together of backward castes (OBCs) and upper caste

Hindus (caste-Hindus). Such an explanation is likely to be challenged by pointing to the various local and regional level conflicts between these two caste groupings, especially to the anti-reservation movements which have of late gripped Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat.

However, the relationship between OBCs and caste-Hindus must be seen as a complex one. While the imperatives of national political power draw these two groups together at the national level, the very process of accommodation generates frictions at the local level. Thus, there exists a dichotomy between the perception of long term planners of political Hinduism who would rather overlook the historical animosities between the two groups, and that of local level actors who are directly affected by increased reservation quotas and so on.

In the traditional urban as well as rural setting, where the two caste groups have lived in an hierarchical relationship for centuries, caste-Hindus find it difficult to treat backward castes as their social co-equals and resent what they see as an encroachment by the latter into their spheres of pre-eminence. Backward castes on the other hand resent the dominance of caste-Hindus and their desire to treat certain social and professional spheres of activity as exclusively their own.

In the highly urbanised and prosperous mercantile State of Gujarat, the conflict is likely to be sharper than elsewhere because of the greater speed of communication as well as a higher level of threat perception by the entrenched caste-Hindus. In other States, the process of accommodation may well turn out to be relatively smoother though not entirely devoid of conflict. Therefore, the current state of tension between anti-reservationists and pro-reservationists need not obscure a deeper though less apparent process of accommodation between caste-Hindus and the OBCs.

The nature of economic power in India in the post-independence years, especially since the sixties, has to be seen as a coalition of middle to rich farmers in the coun-

tryside, and the urban middle class and the entrepreneurial classes or capitalists of various economic strengths in the urban areas. This economic coalition has not expressed itself in the form of an overt political coalition and has in fact been divided by factors such as urban versus rural and castes.

However, the caste composition of the economic coalition has been somewhat as follows. In the rural areas, middle farmers have by and large belonged to the OBCs; rich farmers and landlords to the caste-Hindus but gradually encroached upon by the OBCs. Caste-Hindu landlords have been on the decline in most parts though they do survive powerfully in some areas of U.P., Bihar and so on, lending a distinctly feudal complexion to the politics of these areas.

Muslim landholders range between small to rich farmers and wield considerable power in their pockets of concentration. However, they are not large enough in number to have a decisive influence on the agrarian politics of the country as a separate category. Some lower OBCs and scheduled castes fall into the category of small to marginal farmers but the bulk are landless and are not powerful by themselves. The urban component of the economic coalition is predominantly caste-Hindu though OBCs have been making decisive thrusts in this area.

While this has been the economic coalition, political legitimisation has, since the late sixties, demanded a wider social base, which is why through the seventies the political coalition represented by the Congress was urban caste-Hindus, plus sections of the working class on the one hand and rural caste-Hindus (especially in the North) plus the upper OBCs (in the South but not in the North) plus the scheduled castes and tribes. The Congress commanded the bulk of the minority vote also. This coalition was sufficient to give the Congress roughly 45 per cent of the vote which gave it a clear majority in Parliament.

It may be added that the emphasis on the scheduled caste and tribal

vote by the Congress was occasioned by two factors — the breaking away of the OBC vote from it in the North from the fourth general elections onwards (i.e., from 1967) and the beginnings of radicalisation of the rural poor consequent upon the widening disparities brought about in some areas by the Green Revolution.

However, the rise of the OBCs as a major political and economic force over the last decade and a half and the sheer size of the OBCs who altogether constitute roughly 50 per cent of the Hindu population have made it difficult for the Congress to allow them to remain alienated. Besides, the OBCs, especially in the North, had experienced political power at the Centre for the first time during the Janata years and were more assertive. Also, the renewed shift since the mid-seventies to the idea of agricultural growth, if necessary even at the cost of social welfare, made the upper OBCs a natural focus of attention.

The Mandal Commission's Report is important in this context, even though, as is widely known, it was a product of the Janata period and the Congress, ever since its return to power in 1980, has been cold towards it. The difference between the Mandal Commission's Report (or the Second Backward Classes Commission Report as it is officially called) and the First Backward Classes Commission Report (the Kaka Kalelkar Commission Report) is that while the first report was in a sense an act of 'generosity' on the part of the caste-Hindus towards the downtrodden untouchables, the second report reflects the wresting of concessions by a group that has already arrived.

To elaborate, it reflects the desire of the OBCs to move into the professional and administrative areas of society where substantial power and prestige resides to round off their gains in the political and economic areas. This is naturally seen with alarm by caste-Hindus as it clearly reduces their own areas of employment and influence. That explains the anti-reservation movements, markedly in those two States where hurried promises were made prior to

the last Assembly elections in order to win back the OBC vote.

It is unlikely, however, that the Congress will be able to resist reservations for the OBCs in return for their votes and for the economic role that it assigns to the upper OBCs. It may of course wish to try out other routes to bring about a truce. A possible, but politically unfeasible, route would be to scrap reservations altogether. Another difficult, but not altogether impossible route would be to insist on economic criteria at all levels of reservation including those for scheduled castes and tribes. A third, and the most likely route, will be to settle for a smaller percentage of reservation for the OBCs despite protests from the caste-Hindus, but to the possible satisfaction of the upper OBCs.

This will be to the advantage of the Congress Party as well as to the strategists of political Hinduism who are oriented to the long term rather than the short run. Reservations for the OBCs will amount to their co-optation into political Hinduism. That only the upper OBCs would actually benefit from such reservation need not necessarily divide the OBC vote on this issue, because in theory it would be for all of them and that should be sufficient to rally the bulk of the OBCs to the Congress. It is possible to conceive of a situation where the lower OBCs will break away from the Congress and join the scheduled castes to look for alternative parties which profess greater egalitarianism. In the near future, however, such a possibility seems improbable at the national level.

The new economic strategy with its emphasis on the middle class (consumer and producer) and the private corporate sector fits in well with the new political strategy. Economic growth under this strategy depends on the middle class consumer and on the alliance of the urban middle class with the private corporate sector. It is always difficult to determine who the rural middle classes are. But, roughly speaking, they could be identified as the upper OBCs and caste-Hindu landowners. Even though they cons-

titute a small section of the rural population they, together with the urban middle class, form a large consuming group by international standards.

Thus, even though poverty alleviation and other policies for the rural and urban poor are likely to be retained, the commitment towards these will be tardy. This is evident from the revival of the 'filter-down' idea in some circles, as also the view that a liberalised economy will ultimately benefit the poor if economic growth picks up. It is also argued in these circles that 'socialism' has failed in India. At which point India went socialist is, of course, another matter altogether.

In any case, the growth figures which are supposed to usher in 'filter-down' (something like 7 per cent) are clearly not achievable in the near future even under the most optimistic projections. In fact, it is the rise in prices that is likely to percolate down and hit the poor and the lower middle class harder. As to the rise in employment as a consequence of industrial growth, not a great deal is likely under conditions of ultra-modern industrialisation. The technology which the new economic strategy seeks to import from more advanced industrial countries is labour-saving. Therefore, there may be greater industrial production without necessarily resulting in greater absorption of the unemployed labour force.

An efficient and cost effective capitalist regime may be the target of the new government and it may also suit the purposes of Hindu neo-nationalism as it will the upper classes among the minorities, but it is likely to push the poor into further destitution. How this enclave Hindu political economy will manage consequent social tensions will have to be seen. Perhaps another clarion call will go out from the entrenched elite for a 'hard State' to come to the aid of a 'liberal economy.'

The foregoing analysis and prognostications have been made on the basis of several assumptions. First, that the Hindu social system reflects a reasonably tight pattern of

political behaviour along caste lines. Second, that the differentiations along class lines within castes is not particularly relevant to this analysis and also that the large number of castes included in categories like caste-Hindus, OBCs and scheduled castes do not contain significant internal divisions within these groups. Thirdly, that the all-India linkage between the dominant castes and the enclave Hindu political economy will sustain at the political level and that the Congress will be able to run a stable polity without the support of the marginalised groups. Fourthly, that the emerging system will not be challenged by regional and other ideological conglomerations. And, finally, that the leadership of the Congress will not have second thoughts about the dangers inherent in the present strategy and consequently will not readjust its political and economic stance.

None of these assumptions may hold. The first two assumptions are in any case only partially valid as a great deal of social-science literature would show. The third, fourth and fifth assumptions need further discussion. What does the new political economy portend? If it succeeds, we are likely to see a reasonably stable situation where the upper sections of society, both rural and urban, pass on to high consumerism, perhaps a degenerate kind of consumerism, while the rest are pushed into greater relative deprivation if not absolute destitution.

The number of persons who are sometimes over-optimistically projected to qualify for the first lot will not be anywhere near the majority of the population. (Even if we suppose for the sake of argument that they are, then the success of the present strategy would mean the permanent marginalisation of the excluded lot for they will never be able to mobilise politically for the betterment of their life-chances.) The majority of the people who will be left out of the gains of the economic process will have to wait for the crumbs. But will they wait?

In the highly politicised democratic environment of India, it is unlikely that they will. The State will then

have to take recourse to increased coercion and/or fall back more heavily on ideological instruments such as Hindu neo-nationalism. Logically, this would lead to an Indian version of fascism or to some kind of emergency rule. Such a possibility would be even more likely if the present strategy does not succeed in carrying with it all the upper sections of the population.

Therefore, the limited success of the present strategy as well as its failure are likely to lead India to a political framework which is unacceptable to the political and economic value system to which the founders of free India pledged themselves and to which thinking Indians are, by and large, still firmly committed. Such values include a positive commitment to do away with disabilities arising out of people's situation in society, planning for the poor and indeed for the population as a whole, and an emphasis on self-reliance (not to be read as autarky).

However, it is not altogether impossible that there will be fresh thinking within the present leadership as it gains from the experience of the first few months or even a year or two of the functioning of the emerging system. The political and economic feed-back will probably help it to do so. But the sooner the lessons are learnt the better it will be for the country. Cussedness in the face of emerging realities might land the country into political and social turmoil which will not only shatter the grandiose 21st century dream but put the country back by decades.

In any case, counter-political currents will emerge from amongst the intelligentsia, from other political parties and various social groups which even if they, by virtue of their social station, fall among the consuming class will refuse to be co-opted. Besides, not all the OBCs belong to the rural middle class or to the urban privileged class, not all caste-Hindus are riding the neo-nationalist wave, nor are the bottom 30 to 40 per cent of the people or for that matter the Indian youth, quiescent subalterns to the national elite's 21st century fantasy. The tide will turn.

Contemporary relevance

SATISH C. KAPOOR

CONTEMPORARY Hindu society astonishes by its vigour. Economic and political disasters over the centuries have failed to sap its vitality. An understanding of the reasons for the resilience and inner strength of this society requires an analysis of motives more profound than the current stereotypes of 'revivalism' or 'cultural renaissance'. What are the Hindus purported to 'revive' and who is being 'reborn'? A closer examination of the reasons for the longevity and continuity of this society demands a scrutiny of the enduring attitudes, and the philosophical ideas, that have shaped this tradition gradually, over close to ten millennia.

Practices and rituals originating in the stone age are as much an integral part of the complex structures of contemporary Hindu society as are the rituals appropriate to an agrarian society, and the subtle accretions of later sophisticated ages. The *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* are part of a tradition that pre-dates them by several thousand years: the deification of natural forces by one, and the inchoate metaphysical outpourings of the other, neither mark the beginnings of any new belief system, nor are they the end products of a comprehensive religious and social code.

The bewildering complexity of beliefs, often openly opposed to each other, that characterises Hindu society at present, is related to the continuity of the tradition. Beliefs from different historical periods are not discarded when society moves to another phase in its development but succeed in co-existing with those of each succeeding epoch. Hence the reluctance of the rulers of the Indian republic to abandon the language

and institutions introduced by the British long after they have lost their relevance.

The amazing feat of a continuous social evolution from the beginnings of history to the present day, without discarding the significant accretions during any intervening period, could only have been accomplished by a society marked by its pragmatism and adaptability. The *Shāstras* often seem confusing because of the subtle nuances that hedge most positive affirmations to suit the practical necessities of the diverse times in which they were composed. Their treatment of political sovereignty and the caste system illustrates the dynamic interaction of ancient principles and a constantly changing society.

The primitive concepts of a society imbued with esoteric religious and magical beliefs in the Vedic texts attribute divinity to the king. However, the failings and excesses of mortal sovereigns obliged later thinkers to abandon the notion that the king is god on earth. The divinity of kings, a belief prevalent in mediaeval Europe, is controverted in the post-Vedic *Shāstras*. Even Manu insists that the king is entitled to rule only so long as he upholds *dharma*, the principle of justice and virtue.

Later writers on the subject reject such magical conceits or entertain them in a grudging or half-hearted manner. Kautilya and the *Mahabharata* both have a prosaic view of the king, not as a divine or semi-divine being, but as a custodian, ensuring security, regulating the essential functions of society, including proper administration and, above all, adopting measures to enhance

the wealth of the State and the citizens.

From the divinity of the king upheld by the Vedic compilations, it is a far cry to the *Puranas*, where the main function of the ruler is the enhancement of the wealth of society, through manufacture, external and internal trade, agriculture and banking, by providing stability, peace and proper conditions in which the citizenry can carry out its assigned tasks and live content. Law and order, external affairs and the proper administration of justice through duly constituted law courts and properly trained jurists, are the main functions of the State, apart from economic regulation. The economic role of the State is increasingly emphasised in response to the needs of a fast developing economy during the Puranic period, from the beginnings of the Christian era to the fourteenth century.

Modern Hindu society, in its commitment to economic growth, both for the individual and for the State, also reflects the pragmatic response of a community reduced in circumstances and wealth after the colonial period. Cultural and intellectual pursuits appear to have been deliberately relegated to a peripheral role within the ethos of contemporary Hinduism.

The pivotal structure of Hindu society, namely the caste system, has also evolved as a pragmatic response to the needs of a constantly changing society throughout history. The division of society into four mutually exclusive *varnas* appears a norm which was never strictly enforced, precisely because of the impracticality of forming an organic community with such trenchant divisions. A sound Vedic scholar, like Swami Dayanand, failed to detect any sanction for divisive groupings according to the *varnas* even in the *Vedas*. Later *Dharma-shastras* also assume the prevalence of inter-caste marriages with the constant formation of new, intermediate sub-castes.

The four *varnas* have been submersed by the proliferating hierarchies of *jatis* and sub-castes. Social groups designated as 'backward

castes' at some stage in history, obviously implying their affiliation to the *sudras*, have emerged as confident members of contemporary Hindu society, due to their special hereditary skills, on par with the upper castes. Ambiguous sub-caste names, like Verma, referring to the Kshatriyas, have now been indiscriminately adopted by Kayashtas, whose *varna* has never been clear, or *jatis*, who traditionally belong to the backward castes.

The divisive ideal of castes has thus changed, under the pressure of practical social needs, into a principle for binding together the dispersed groups within society into an organic community. The Indian lives according to the demands of the system of *jatis* or sub-castes arranged in a continuous chain, while mouthing a ritual homage to the theoretical division into *varnas*, often bemoaning the divisive tendencies of the caste system as he has learnt from English text-books. The fragmentation into sub-castes has now proceeded so far that some sociologists, characteristically overstating their case, deny the existence of *varnas* altogether in contemporary Hinduism!

The adaptability and pragmatism that have ensured the continuing vigour of this unbroken tradition are derived from an all-encompassing philosophical vision, so deeply embedded that it governs every aspect of life, though many Hindus today, especially the English speaking urbanites, are incapable of articulating it. Indian languages have been moulded by a metaphysics that cannot be expressed in an import like English, formed by the exigencies of an alien culture. Hindu thought is dialectical: it seeks to reconcile opposing concepts by evolving a synthesis that transcends the limitations of both terms.

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of interpretations and philosophical systems, the world-picture of the Hindus is based upon a core of ideas which jointly explain the origin and development of the world, and the nature of reality: time and eternity; the three fundamental principles of differentiation or *gunas*; four opposing sets of

valuational concepts: *dharma* and *adharma*, along with *Vigyan*, *Aishvaarya*, *Vairagya* and their respective contraries; finally, an implacable law of cause and effect. A relative status is assigned to each of these terms or principles, accompanied by a sustained effort to show that all contraries contain within themselves a principle of transcendence that both reconciles a concept to its opposite and proclaims the inadequacy of human thought to grasp or formulate any absolute categories.

A maverick school, like the Advaita of Shankaracharya, attempts the impossible task of denying the absolute validity of any mode of human experience or thought, while claiming to possess knowledge of absolute reality. The blatant contradiction in Shankaracharya's thought has not escaped the scrutiny of traditional philosophers, though Hindu apologists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from Vivekanand and the founders of the Arya and Brahmo Samaj, to Radhakrishnan and other recent popularisers of Hinduism, have installed this odd off-shoot, Advaita, as the reigning orthodoxy of our times. Only the *Bhagvat Gita*, more notable for its brevity than for its coherence or depth, competes with Shankaracharya in the confused accounts of their religion by contemporary Hindus.

Shankaracharya's nihilism concerning all aspects of temporal reality sins against the cardinal principle of Hinduism: an all inclusive harmony. The dialectic of Hindu thought pursues every argument to a conclusion where conflicts and contradictions are shown to arise from partial understanding: a grasp of the total scheme harmoniously reconciles thought and reality. The dramatic world picture, inherited from the Greeks and mediaeval Christianity in the West, portraying the universe as a battlefield between justice and injustice, or good and evil, culminating in the triumph of one term in the conflict and the annihilation of the other, is replaced in the milder climate and gentler environment of a sub-tropical land, by a tolerant synthesis without exclusions, in a hierarchy comparable to

the luxuriant growth of the Indian jungle, where everything flourishes, from the creeper to the banyan tree.

The intellectual tolerance of the Hindus, the capacity to entertain divergent, sometimes mutually incompatible ideas on any subject, derives from the rejection of dogmatism on fundamental ontological issues. Even the nature of God is left an open question in this tradition: Kapila, the founder of Samkhya philosophy does not require the concept of a deity for his system; Shankaracharya opts for an impersonal absolute in place of God; Ramanujam conceives of God as a person...

The opposite of this intellectual tolerance is the rigidity of Hindu social customs: the minute regulation of all aspects of personal and social life, from the details of personal hygiene and diet, to the innumerable obligations, spelt out at great length in the *Shastras*, that constitute an individual's social *dharma*. This ritualisation of even the most trivial acts of ordinary existence, often appals the urban, middle class Hindu, who nonetheless continues to subscribe to it in practice. The open-minded approach to the most general ideas relating to reality and existence has forced the Hindus to control the minutiae of daily existence and social intercourse, for fear that society might disintegrate if the same liberality were rampant in social as in intellectual matters.

Other societies have massacred vast numbers of their populations for believing that evil could be co-eternal with the good, or for daring to represent God in a pictorial image, not to mention the fanaticism of opposing dogmatists as to the personality or impersonality of the deity and the horrendous wars fought over the question of the nature of divine grace and its operation during religious ceremonies.

Contrariwise, the Hindus agonise over the purity of their well, contaminated should an untouchable draw water from it, or the direction they should face when asleep, or when defecating and performing their morning ablutions.

The dialectical thinking of the Hindus has resolved the apparent dilemma of ensuring liberty of thought, at the most general levels of metaphysics, morals, philosophy and religion, without endangering stable social structures by the ritualisation of the details of an individual's daily conduct. Contact with alien cultures, that generally leads to a defensive and uncreative fundamentalism as in contemporary Islam, has been avoided in Hinduism, barring some nineteenth century aberrations, precisely for this reason. Scientific and philosophical ideas derived from the British and other English-speaking societies, have been adopted by the Hindus in our times, without the accompanying spiritual anguish or social upheavals of other societies.

The world picture of the Hindus presents an interesting contrast to the model developed by western thinkers: the Hindus have sought an harmonious resolution of opposites through their dialectics, while western thinkers have forced themselves into a position where reality is constituted by a series of irreconcilable and conflicting ideas and entities, an inevitable consequence of the basic assumptions made by European thought over its long history.

The contrast with the Hindu world picture could not be more complete: the constitutive principles of the temporal world, three in number, are modelled on a complex series of analogies drawn from psychology, biology and physics. These three *gunas* resemble the mental states of understanding, passionate activity, and lethargic sleep respectively; biologically they are similar to fruitful maturity, the process of growth, and dormancy; physically, they are analogous to illumination, energetic displacement, and darkness.

The primary evolute, after the equilibrium of the *gunas* is disturbed through the operation of time, forms four dialectical pairs of opposing ideas or normative principles: they guide the future course of cosmic evolution because of their abstract universal forms and causal antecedence with respect to the rest of creation. All subsequent evolutes seek to realise them in varying pro-

portions and with different degrees of success.

The four pairs of ideas guiding the course of evolution are: *Dharma* and its contrary, *Adharma*; *Aishvarya* (magnificence or sublimity), *Vigyan* (mental or spiritual illumination), and *Vairagya* (transcendence of worldly pursuits and passions); three anti-ideals opposed to these norms are also evolved: triviality and pettiness; mental or spiritual opaqueness; passionate involvement in worldly pursuits.

The most significant contribution of Hindu thought, in interpreting the world and human society, follows from the insertion of values, moral, aesthetic, spiritual and intellectual, not only as abstract norms guiding the evolution of all that exists, but also as the very stuff required for the creation of individual entities. *Dharma* in its four fold meaning, is the good and the right, but it also refers to the essential nature of each object as it is formed in the temporal process. The rejection of moral values from the material or objective world in the western tradition, and the resulting tragedies with which history is littered, focusses attention on the discrepancy between that which is and that which ought to be.

For the Hindu, no such problem arises as there is no discrepancy between 'is' and 'ought': if *dharma* expresses the nature of everything, and the good and the right are defined as *dharma*, then no external sanctions are required in morality or for the legal code. Instances abound in ordinary conversation as well as in the *Shastras* for this multiple use of the word '*dharma*'. Kaliya, the serpent, is spared his life by a vengeful Krishna when it is pointed out that the snake has spread poison quite justifiably since it is the *dharma* or essential nature of such a reptile to be poisonous.

Dharma introduces moral values into the world. Similarly, the three other norms express different ideals cherished by man. The untranslatable concept of *Aishvarya*, which makes for magnificence, sublimity and grandeur epitomises the Hindu ideal of aesthetics. *Vigyan* and *Vairagya* ensure that all creation

contains an element of intellectual and spiritual perfection within it. The Hindus attribute value not only to man or divinity; they also see goodness, beauty, truth and spirituality in all that exists. By conforming to *dharma*, everything in the world is harmonious both within itself and in its relation to the rest of creation. Unexpected jumps and irreconcilable dichotomies, such as the distinction between 'objective' matter and 'subjective' values and the mind, have neither relevance nor meaning in the Hindu tradition.

Curiously, the Judeo-Christian heritage still weighs heavily on western moral philosophy: values might be subjective, nonetheless they are absolute. Good and evil, beauty and ugliness, right and wrong, truth and falsehood cannot be transcended or reconciled. Values are not relative, nor do they permit of gradations or nuances that alter with the circumstances. If murder or lying or stealing are wrong, it is impossible ever to condone them.

The Hindus have avoided this difficulty in several ways. First, the world is not created by the instantaneous fiat of God, but it evolves gradually in accordance with norms that require time for their development, as the creative process proceeds. Secondly, values are conceived relationally: the creation of each one of the four normative principles guiding existence, is also accompanied by the emergence of their exact opposites. Thirdly, the dialectical interplay of positive and negative values provides a major incentive for the evolution of the temporal world, but it has no ultimate significance. Not only the eternal but also time and the *gunas* in their undisturbed, original state transcend the opposition of *dharma*, *adharma* and other normative principles. Fourthly, the ideals guiding the evolutionary process are not static: the temporal world is in perpetual flux and each entity, like every situation, has values appropriate to it depending upon the total emergent nexus.

The Hindu thus gives value to all situations, because emergent reality is always endowed with its own

mixture of values and disvalues, which are no subjective additions to the phenomena. At the same time, morality or aesthetics are relative to a given position and vary with the circumstances. Fanatical adherence to some narrowly conceived moral, aesthetic or other ideal has always been anathema to the Hindus.

Repugnant as the western world picture is to the Hindu, some fortuitous ambiguities have facilitated his access to contemporary western models. First, the filtration of European thought through the British prism has so distorted the original as to make it palatable to the Hindu mind. In the social sciences the deliberate misunderstanding of certain English words has helped the process. The loquacious politicians have introduced terms like 'secularism' and 'egalitarianism' to sell their wares under false pretences. The Hindu tradition resolutely rejects such concepts, which cannot be accurately translated into the local languages.

The result is that 'secularism' meaning 'rejection of all religious sanctions in social and political legislation' is identified with the wholly different concept, so admirably adumbrated by the Hindu tradition, of 'tolerance'. Likewise, 'egalitarianism' in actual usage has come to mean 'social justice', a variant of *dharma*, in India. How Hindu society, so totally bound by an indeterminate number of hierarchies, could grasp this ideal of the French revolution boggles the mind.

The British connection has, however, been of great value in presenting the physical and biological sciences within a bland, empiricist mould, to the Hindus. Superficial and misleading as an account of the philosophical, methodological, and historical basis of science, the empiricist version opines that scientific investigation is a summary record of observational data in accordance with some variant of Baconian induction and Hume's epistemology, eschewing metaphysics and ontology. This suits the Hindu admirably as it permits him to believe that he can pursue science as an observational activity, allied to the precision of mathematics, without in any

way interfering with his traditional world picture.

Secondly, the Hindu tradition facilitates access to the modern world of science and industry at a profound level. The importance of time and temporal evolution in the Hindu world picture naturally attracts Hindu society to those scientific theories where time or evolutionary concepts play a major role. Similarly, the obsessive search for the relation of cause and effect in all temporal events, material, moral or psychological, and the impressive logical analyses of the nature of causality in Indian thought, have conditioned the Hindu to study phenomena dispassionately and with genuine scientific curiosity, in order to unravel causal connections.

Thirdly, the Hindu *Shastras*, by encouraging the economic motive and entrepreneurship as the main-springs of social and political well-being have helped the creation of an industrial society based on technological innovation. The *Shastras* demand that each individual educate himself in order to become a self-sufficient householder, not only capable of supporting himself and his family, but also increasing his own wealth and the State's treasury as well as supporting charitable institutions through his own efforts.

The stereotype of contemporary India presented by the media and politicians, as a society torn by conflicts and dissensions among its numerous components, contradicts the primordial principle upon which rests the entire Hindu tradition: harmony. Since independence, the political leadership, the administration and the public relations machinery of the State have passed into the hands of a small urban group, bound together by their upper and middle class upbringing, which revolves around linguistic and intellectual training in a foreign language: English. For brevity we will refer to them as the 'urbanites', though 'Anglicised urbanites' would be more appropriate. Despite their patriotism, commitment to progress and an improvement in the living standards of the people, these guides share a perception of Indian reality, moulded by British influences, that is at variance with the

direct experiences of living within the Hindu tradition and its philosophy.

The urbanites have saddled the country with a development model that reflects their own divided self, which conceptualises in one way and lives in another. The conflict ridden collective personality of this group is incapable of perceiving harmony, and its internal divisions are projected on to the larger Hindu polity, from which the overwhelming majority of the urbanites are drawn. Hence the all embracing impression of confusion and chaos highlighted by their stereotypes, regionalism, casteism, communalism, threatening to destroy society.

Eventually, the stereotype derives from the consternation of the Hindu elite upon realising that political power had again escaped its grasp with the establishment of British paramountcy in the early nineteenth century. The reformers of the last century, whether recognising a return to the purity of the *Vedas* as in the Arya Samaj, or an advance to deism and scientism like the Brahmo Samajis, were convinced that the Hindus had proved incompetent to govern themselves because of some deep rooted failure in their society. An obvious explanation was the political division, with the emergence of regional centres of power like the Maharattas and the Sikhs, following the collapse of the Moghul empire. The Hindu leaders were persuaded that their society had succumbed to successive foreign invasions, because of the assertion of separate local identities, at the cost of national unity.

Similarly, the inter-caste pattern of Indian society, structured according to sub-caste hierarchies, encouraged the view that Hindu society was as divisive internally as it was in its political and geographical articulations. The cure for the ills of this society appeared to lie in the creation of a bland Hindu 'Mahasabha', without regional disparities or caste divisions, according to Swami Dayanand, Raja Ram Mohan Roy and other nineteenth century reformers. However, it was difficult to accommodate the numerous, numerically significant

non-Hindu groups within the blueprint for a 'greater' Hindu society.

Bowing to the logic of their position, the earlier leaders rejected the minorities, especially the largest amongst them, the Muslims, as foreign intruders, against all the historical and social evidence. A stereotype, based upon a fictitious view of India, spearheaded by British historians who are still fishing for the same red-herring, projected the Muslims as aliens, who had forced their domination upon a hopelessly divided India, and mercilessly exploited an unwilling subject people for centuries, without ever integrating with it. The fact that Muslims are local converts, and even those who came from outside as invaders chose to settle and make India their homeland, rather than hearkening back to some remote place of origin; or that economically India remained a 'pivotal world economy', as Ferdinand Braudel calls it, enjoying unparalleled prosperity, largely controlled by the Hindus during the period of Muslim domination; likewise the integration of the Hindu aristocracy with the Moghul courtiers, and that of the Muslim craftsmen in Hindu business houses: all this is ignored by the stereotype.

Mindless adhesion to this image of India took its toll in 1947. The protests of the urbanite leaders failed to carry conviction precisely because of the absence of an alternative model of Indian history and society. Even Gandhiji's intuition of the profound unity of Indian society appeared like pious sentimentality rather than a rational assessment of the evidence. Faced with the task of creating a modern State, the leadership inevitably reacted against tendencies that supposedly precluded the emergence of a strong and united country. Divisive trends, both internal, due to sub-caste groups, and external, arising from the presence of non-Hindus in the polity, had rendered India incapable of conserving its independence in the past. Such divisions must therefore be eradicated in organising the new republic.

An intellectually sterile leadership, instead of building upon its own

tradition, looked to the West for a solution; caste divisions could be eliminated by abandoning the hierarchical structure of society and substituting egalitarianism for it. Hence the make-believe world of the modern Indian Republic in which all reference to caste in a population census is forbidden by government decree. Similarly, to avoid splitting society into different religious groups, the panacea is another nineteenth century French innovation — secularism.

The egalitarian and secular model of the State is a negative ideal, devised by a defensive urban leadership, imprisoned within the nineteenth century stereotype of Indian history and society. However, the early reformers vision, supplemented by the British historians' projection of India as a fragmented polity, bound into an artificial unity by force of British arms and diplomacy, barring a couple of historical exceptions like the Moghuls and Asoka, is not sacrosanct.

Nor is there anything sacred about the view that the caste system is divisive, having split Hindu society into irreconcilable groups; far less is the historical distortion which stipulates that Muslims and other non-Hindus are alienated from the mainstream of Indian history and society. A less biased appreciation of the Indian reality would release contemporary Hindu society from straining at the leash in pursuit of those false ideals which an alienated leadership wishes to impose upon it.

The elementary distinction between the historical unit of political organisation, in a country as vast as India, and the cultural homogeneity of the sub-continent should suffice to allay the fears of Hindu leadership about the divisive tendencies in Indian society. The pride in local and regional variations on the national cultural pattern reinforces rather than diminishes the shared awareness of an all pervasive vision of man, society and the cosmos at all periods of Indian history. The pragmatic spirit of the Hindu tradition has coped with the economic and other necessities which impel the country towards unification, as at present, or towards diversification

into smaller States, when vigorous local groups create their semi-autonomous systems of government.

India was glorious in the times of Asoka and the Moghuls. But the united country during British rule descended to the lowest depths in almost every domain. Conversely, all that is great within the Hindu tradition, before the admixture of external influences from Islam and other cultures dates from the great Puranic period: sculpture, painting, architecture, philosophy, jurisprudence, mathematics, medicine, the positive sciences and other creative expressions of the Hindu mind, flourished from the first to the thirteenth century A.D., as at no other period, though the country was almost continuously divided between a large number of Rajput and other kingdoms.

The normative ideal of a united country was never extinguished in Indian history, as the aspirations of major rulers towards the status of a *Chakravartin* amply testify, but the country prospered in its politically fragmented state. The recent tendency of denigrating the Rajputs and the Puranic period as 'divisive' should be set against the record of other rulers. The Rajput kingdoms, despite constant internecine warfare and foreign threats, lasted for over a thousand years. In contrast, the Muslim kingdoms could only notch up a score of five centuries, while the Sikhs, despite current boasts, had their kingdom snuffed out by the British invader within less than a century.

The *Shastras* bear witness to the enduring unity of Indian society and culture not only empirically, but also at a much deeper metaphysical level. The notion that India is one and indivisible because of its unique status in the world is one of the major themes of the *Mahabharata*. Considering the perennial fascination of this work for the Hindus, its importance in fomenting the unity of the country cannot be exaggerated. A Chola citizen from the extreme south had to visit Amarnath in Kashmir as imperatively as a Kashmiri had to travel to Kanya Kumari on the southern tip. The same is true for Puri and Dwarka,

at the eastern and western boundaries of the land, as pilgrim centres. The Hindu psyche has thus internalised the frontiers of the country as part of its intimate topology.

Despite the misgivings of the present leadership about the abiding unity of India, derived from the misconceptions of British historians, earlier travellers to the country never doubted the homogeneity of the tradition, amidst all its diversity. Al-Beruni and Ferishta both record the common practices and belief systems of the people of Hindoostan as a unified whole, rather than harping on the fragmentation within this society, which continues to obsess the British and disconcert the urbanities. In pointed contrast, the French historian of the 'Hindu States of the Far East', George Coedes, remarks on the totalitarian nature of Chinese expansion: all countries influenced by the Chinese were forcibly Sinified, without leaving any scope for local variations.

Conversely, the vast number of countries that acquired even their written language, not to mention other evolved forms of culture from the Hindus, in an area stretching from Central Asia overland to the borders of China in the north, and by the sea route up to Indonesia in the south, between the second and the fourteenth centuries A.D., all preserved their distinctive local characteristics despite profound immersion in the Hindu tradition. The genius of the Hindus has been in assimilating variations within the firm patterns of their own culture, without crushing local initiatives. The recent hysteria about the emergence of regional identities is an alarming development of absolutist or totalitarian tendencies by the Anglicised urbanites, borrowed from Puritanical Europe, if not China.

The thundering clichés about the divisive nature of the caste system must be qualified by saying that prohibitions about marriage and food classify society into distinct groups, but the caste structure as a whole imposes a compulsory unity upon the social organism: 'caste divides only to unite more firmly'. If the alienated model of contempo-

rary western society has not evolved in India, the credit lies with the caste system. The danger to be avoided in a rapidly industrialising economy is the isolation of the individual in the growing megalopolis. The leadership must learn to utilise the existing caste structures in rural India to create an organic community, or communities, within the expanding urban centres, instead of seeking to destroy them as obsolescent. Even today an Indian town or city is organised by the caste and regional affiliations of its inhabitants. It would be wanton folly to destroy these in the name of some irrelevant ideal of enforced equality and unity.

Louis Dumont and other sociologists, in their studies of contemporary Indian society, have confirmed a fundamental aspect of the caste structures, emphasised by the *Shastras* but over which British commentators and Christian missionaries are strangely silent, namely, *Jajmani*. The continuous chain formed by the sub-caste hierarchy does not exclude any member of the community, Hindu or non-Hindu: certain rights and duties are prescribed for everyone.

The notion of a Hindu *Mahasabha*, a 'great' society composed exclusively of Hindus, from which the other denominations within a community are excluded, is incompatible with the basic imperative of *Jajmani*, as laid down by the *Shastras*, and traditionally observed in every village until now. Conversely, minorities, like the Muslims and the Sikhs, cannot opt out of the organically conceived community in an Indian village in order to assert some narrow and selfish ideal of group identity: intellectual and religious tolerance has always been compatible with the scheme of obligations and rewards regulating the smooth flow of organised country life.

The urbanite leadership also suffers from a host of anxieties relating to rituals, traditional patterns of behaviour, and belief systems, held to be responsible for the country's backwardness, not only economically and in science and technology but also in other domains. The anti-hero stalking the nightmares of Anglicised

Hindus is 'revivalism': the atavistic clinging to ideas and practices enshrined in the *Shastras*. The bogey of revivalism is another borrowed concept that cannot be reconciled with the Hindu tradition.

Emotional debates about obscurantist efforts to revive past ideologies irrelevant to our times, acquire their intensity from the happenings in Iran and other Muslim countries launched on fundamentalist adventures. Despite the pathetic failure of Islamic visionaries to make a coherent statement about their beliefs, they can nonetheless point to the irrefutable authority of a single text, the *Koran*, on which there is unanimity. No such unique text is sanctioned by Hinduism.

Besides, the continuity of the tradition and the perennial restatement of its basic tenets, in response to changing demands during its long history and diversified developments, make it impossible to select an authoritative text, or even ritual practices that are common to all Hindus. Examples of the misunderstanding upon which feeds the fear of Hindu revivalism are the anxiety about the establishment of a 'Hindu Rashtriya' by the diehards, or the precarious position to which women would be reduced if Hinduism held undisputed sway.

A curious irony attaches to the attempt to present 'Hindu Rashtriya' as a revivalist concept. The entire Hindu tradition is based upon the refusal to confound temporal with spiritual power. A king rules in the secular domain: Brahmins and Sanyasis assume responsibilities for the spiritual well-being of man and society. A king cannot arrogate any of the privileges of spiritual guidance for himself: he must be content with the governance of his earthly dominions. Conversely, a Brahmin must not aspire to any power beyond the spiritual.

The whole notion of 'Hindu Rashtriya' rests upon concepts borrowed from Islam and Christianity, where the ruler is the joint head of the two realms, temporal and spiritual. The Muslim rulers are also the supreme religious power in whose name the *khatwa* is read

in the mosques of the realm, while in the Anglican church the sovereign is head both of his kingdom and of the church.

The difference between the Hindu *Dharmashastras* and the Christian and Islamic philosophies of the State, is precisely due to the rejection by the Hindus of the notion of a theocratic State, controlled by the clergy, with the king acting as the earthly representative of God. Obliteration of the distinction between the power of the profane State, and the spiritual power of the Brahmins, might be an innovation in keeping with British and Muslim ideas, but it would be monstrous to call it 'revivalist' within a tradition that has always abhorred a confusion between the temporal and the spiritual realms!

Fears about the denigration of women are also derived from the extrapolation of Christian and Muslim ideas rather than from a serious study of the *Shastras*, whose 'revival' would not countenance the relegation of women to an inferior status. The *Koran* holds women in such contempt that they are denied entrance to a religious place while menfolk are at prayer. Both the Christian canon law and the Muslim sacred texts deny a rational soul to women.

Contrariwise, the Hindus have always worshipped the female principle: half the community is committed to the worship of Devi and other female figures. Not even the phallic worshipping Sivaites dare denigrate womanhood: when aroused, Parvati and her Shaktis so trounced the phallic God and his hordes that Siva had to hide, trembling behind a rock. The dancing figure of an inebriated Kali trampling her Lord underfoot is a familiar image worshipped by the Hindus.

So, far from being defensive about the role and importance of women in Hinduism, and the consequences of a backlash, the Indian leadership should cherish its alternative tradition, based on the tender care for female qualities and virtues, in a suicidal world dominated by the *macho* ethos of Judeo-Christian-Islamic societies.

'Revivalism' is too ambiguous and incoherent a notion to be significant within Hindu society, and anxieties about it are based upon extrapolation from the experience of others. However, the technological, scientific, and economic backwardness of the Hindus is a palpable fact in the modern world. The Anglicised urbanites blame this on the 'feudal' values inculcated by the tradition. Ignoring the unfortunate usage of the word, since India has never had a system that corresponds to the 'feudal society' in Europe, in Marc Bloch's sense, what is the explanation for India's backwardness which the Indian leadership quite rightly recognises as the most important problem facing contemporary Hindu society?

It must be pointed out that, first, the problem is of relatively recent origin. The Hindus have a creditable record in the development of science from antiquity until the seventeenth century, when the great intellectual synthesis of Galileo, Descartes and Newton, laid the foundations for the European leadership in 'modern' science, predominant since the nineteenth century. It has been estimated that the volume of scientific literature in India probably exceeds that of any other society until the end of the eighteenth century.

Secondly, the economic and technological backwardness of India is also not an ancient phenomenon. Ferdinand Braudel asserts that India was probably the earliest to develop a proper monetary market economy and that this 'fulcrum' of the world economy was not only frequently in advance over others throughout history but that it also compared favourably with Europe as late as in the eighteenth century. Both India and Europe had a per capita income of slightly over \$ 200 in 1800 A.D.

Thirdly, the ideal of *artha*, one of three aims of existence for the Hindus, demanding the necessity of increasing wealth through hard work and thrift, long before the Protestant ethic was invented, is responsible for the all pervasive obsession with the creation of riches in India today, as in the past. At the height of its power, the

Central government of the Moghuls assigned a charter of civic liberties, amounting to virtual autonomy, to the major commercial and manufacturing centres like Surat. Apparently, a fifth of the total population under the Moghuls in the seventeenth century enjoyed such a franchise. Fourthly, in a comparative study, Braudel insists that in all manufacturing industries, from textiles to metallurgy, India was at least as advanced as Europe until the mid-eighteenth century, while in some, like ship-building, it was technically way ahead. Instead of fostering a futile paternalism, supposedly aimed at forcing the ordinary citizen to become technologically progressive, the urbanite leadership has no better ally in its efforts at economic modernisation than the traditional Hindu, whom the leaders should encourage to participate in the change. The colonial period, which coincides with the onset of Indian backwardness, sufficiently accounts for it; the need for blaming the Hindu tradition does not arise.

The Anglicised Hindu is a divided self. He desperately hopes to discard the tradition, of which he nonetheless continues to be a part, and run after strange gods imported from the West. But to no avail, and for no purpose. A society that has shown such a genius for growth through assimilation and adaptation, is too rugged and pragmatic to be a slavish imitator, whether in the name of science or modernity. The bulk of Hindu society has absorbed the message and will no doubt transform its scientific and technological bases to keep abreast of our times.

However, this will not be achieved by denigrating its own historical reality. The urbanised leadership should set an example to the rest of mankind by showing how an industrialised society does not have to be alienated, nor need it reject those values which mankind has always cherished, by assigning a merely subjective status to them. *Dharma*, *Aishvarya*, *Vigyan*, and *Vairagya* must be values actively pursued by man as he learns to enjoy the fruits of modern science and technology. The right and the good should be integrated into the universe, just as

the fulfilment of the inner nature of everything that exists must be seen as an objective necessity, on par with the harmonious interaction of all mankind, within the norms established by tradition that selects concord, and eliminates discord. *Dharma* is within everything: man, society, and the cosmos with all its components, living and non-living.

Likewise, the trivial, the petty, all that debases the glory of creation, must be eschewed because *Aishvarya*, the sublime and the majestic, is an intrinsic part of all that is. Beauty is not perfect proportion or the exact symbiosis of form and content, it is the grandeur indissolubly associated with every entity as it evolves within a dynamic world. The squalor of the modern Indian metropolis and the aesthetic insensitivity of the contemporary Hindu are inimical to the tradition: industrialisation must not place the lesser aim of *artha* ahead of the greater cosmic ideal of *Aishvarya*; this should be the vision guiding the country towards modernisation.

The norms of *Vigyan* and *Vairagya* should enable India to avoid the most serious failing of the industrialised western societies: the alienation of the individual from himself. The Cartesian separation of mind and body is one aspect of a more general tendency towards dehumanisation in contemporary thought. Human experience has been so compartmentalised that its wholeness and integrity are lost in a haze of abstractions, each isolated from the others. Thought, feeling and action are dissociated by western thinkers as reified entities, without conceptual inter-relatedness or mutual interdependence. Reason, understanding and even sense-perception are conceived as purely passive functions, whose purity must not be sullied by emotion or action.

Conversely, feelings are outpourings without rational moorings, to be distrusted while engaged in action. Action motivated by emotion is suspect, and so is reason 'clouded over' by emotion. Reason and understanding might provide guidelines, though not motives for action, but they move in such an abstract domain that ideas elaborated by

logic and inference can never find a precise 'fit' with the products of action in this mundane world.

Insight, intuition, and activities not motivated by direct practical gains remain an enigma and a mystery in the dehumanised model of human experience devised by the West. Ignoring the fact that man thinks, acts, and feels simultaneously, and that a great effort of abstraction is necessary before the wholeness of experience can be broken into unrelated compartments, has further alienated man from himself: he cannot recover his integrated self.

Indian thought has developed in the opposite direction: the sense organs are not passive recipients of data but energetic centres, whose functions include activities like speech and seeing. Likewise, *buddhi* is not reason or understanding leading to static 'knowledge' or 'true cognition', but the active function involved in 'rational' decision-making. Man does not have the divided experience of thinking at one level and acting at another, but a total awareness in which he is motivated ('feels') to understand and reason, in order to make dynamic decisions. The ideal of *Vigyan* is not the search for pure knowledge, an abstraction, but the motivated search for intellectual illumination, in which reason, understanding, intuition and insight, are equally involved.

Similarly, *Vairagya* is not an ascetic renunciation of this world, but a passionate involvement with the spiritual. The harmony of man with himself and society, along with the rest of the evolving cosmos, are cherished ideals that a society in the process of industrialisation must emulate from the Hindu tradition to avoid the sterility of the 'consumer society'. The greatest challenge facing the Hindus is the articulation of their philosophy in terms that are meaningful within the contemporary situation, as this society successfully completes its metamorphosis into a scientifically and technologically advanced nation where material possessions are at the service of a new and noble humanity.

The national ethos

C. R. MUTHAMMA

THE term 'Hindu' is applied to approximately three fourths of the population of this country. Hindu communities exist elsewhere, notably in Nepal and parts of South and South East Asia; but the term is usually associated with India, and not merely because of its size and population. The very word 'Hindu' was, in its origins, linked with the name of India and covered much of what was of Indian growth in religious and philosophical thought and tradition and a total pattern of living.

Hinduism covers the sophisticated Vedantins, the monists the dualists: the propitiators of evil spirits in south Karnataka, the ancestor worshippers of Kodagu. It includes the vegetarian Brahmins of Tamil Nadu, the fish-eating Brahmins of Bengal, the meat-eating Brahmins of Kashmir. It has no concept of heresy. There is no religious hierarchy wielding authority over the lay populace. No right is given to anybody, including the priests, to tell others what to believe. The priests only perform rituals against 'dakshina', a payment for their service. But there is no obligation on anybody to perform any *pooja*, or even to go to the temple or, indeed, even to pray.

A Hindu will go equally happily to a temple, a mosque, a church, a gurudwara or any other place of worship. A Pakistani writing in an Indian newspaper some time ago observed that the majority of the pilgrims at Ajmer were Hindus. Pope Paul, who visited India in the sixties at the time of the Eucharistic Congress found himself facing an enormous open-air congregation in Bombay, a large proportion of

which was obviously Hindu, because the Christian population of Bombay could not have mustered that size of crowd. An astonished and moved Pope Paul wrote a warm and appreciative letter at the end of his visit to the *Times of India*, which printed a facsimile on its front page.

This unique 'inclusiveness', this great reverence for all the great teachers of mankind and for all possible sources of truth has been inadequately described, mainly by westerners, as India's 'tolerance.' Tolerance is a negative virtue — it does not involve acceptance. But the Hindu search for truth was as positive in the age of the *Upanishads* as in the age of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Vedantins include the conclusions of great scientists — including modern western scientists — on the nature of the universe as part of this overall picture of reality, as is seen in many publications of Vedanta centres. It is a no-holds-barred search for truth, where each person is a seeker, taking help from whatever source is available, going where his search takes him, with no dogma to limit his horizons.

There must be some lurking regret somewhere in this country that all the great teachers of mankind did not arise in India. Since Christ was not born in India, some Indians have floated the theory that he was at least buried in India. If India could find a way of claiming the Prophet and Moses, Zoroaster and Socrates, it probably would. It has done the next best thing by welcoming their teachings with an open heart and an open mind, into this marvellous land of all faiths. It has traditionally given asylum to those

who fled persecution in other lands, whether religious, political or other. It is a tradition that is still alive.

Because Hindus have always been a dominant influence, not only numerically but in the totality of their traditions in all sectors, even in periods when the dominant State power was non-Hindu, this attitude of acceptance and of a lack of rejection or of contempt of others has informed all aspects of national life. More, it has also informed, in significant ways, the attitude of non-Hindus in India.

For instance, the western concept of 'Christian' and 'Pagan', with a pejorative connotation to 'Pagan' is not part of the Indian Christian tradition, especially the ancient — and very Indian — Christian communities of Kerala. There were eminent Kerala Christian commentators on Hindu scriptures. In our own days, there is a young Goan priest who has used the Bharat Natyam idiom for depicting the life of Christ. And why not, since it was basically a vehicle for the praise of God. Indian Christianity has no Inquisitions, no crusades.

Indian Islam (or was it Hinduism?) has produced a Kabir, a Tansen, the great Emperor Akbar, an Ustad Allauddin Khan and a host of others. Over the centuries India has produced Muslim mystics and poets and musicians, and great men and women in many fields, who were as Indian as they were Muslim. They were not freaks but the outcome of a strong and living tradition. India has many centres of Muslim learning and many schools of Muslim thought, a situation that is not possible in some Muslim countries where those in power lay down what true Islam is, rejecting and outlawing all deviations from the prescribed version. The total freedom of conscience, whatever the religion (or lack of it), is part of the general environment in India.

The many religions of Indian origin exist in a unique combination of separate entities without mutually exclusive boundaries, especially vis-a-vis Hinduism.

If this unbounded freedom of thought and belief, this lack of big-

otry, can prevail in religion, which is the heart and core of the entity of an individual and of a society, it is natural that it should inform the Hindu attitude to all other aspects of life. It is, beyond doubt, the single most important factor that makes democracy possible in this country. The Indian Constitution is wholly non-sectarian in every sense. India's leaders and governments at the Centre and in the States, naturally and as a matter of course, co-opted into power people of different religions, regions, or groups of whatever kind.

One often hears the mystified question (usually from westerners): how can a country as poor and backward as India be a practising and credible democracy, in such striking contrast to the majority of the third world? It calls for two answers. Firstly, it is only in the West that democracy hinges on money and prosperity, whether starting from the no-taxation without representation movement and ending with employer-worker confrontation and social democracy as in one variety of western democracy; or class warfare and the liquidation of the privileged, as in another kind of western democracy. India has ended the princely class without persecuting or bodily liquidating them; even colonialism was fought without hatred and violence—a fight that rejected the system, not the British people, or their language, or their ideas and values.

The second answer is that in the so-called 'free' West, dictatorships and a denial of personal freedom are a recurring feature. Even in the prosperous 'democracies' there are large sections, especially racial or conquered minorities, who are not only denied a reasonable share of the national prosperity, but in many ways, overt and covert, denied equal rights, civil and social. The people of these 'democracies' have a world view of graded races and peoples, who are considered inferior in different degrees, either to be persecuted outright as in the Apartheid system, or at least controlled and directed paternalistically by the West; their cultures to be given an inferior rating, and even

religion and the name of God to be bestowed on them as the gift of the West.

Hinduism, notwithstanding serious aberrations like untouchability, does not have an attitude of classifying humanity into such categories, whether internally or externally. In its universal view, even non-human life and inanimate existence are accepted as having an intrinsic right to be; 'The world is a family' is an ancient ideal, and it is brought home to the masses by an extensive mythology in which the whole universe, human, animal and inanimate, is imbued with divinity. It is a view that is beginning to have a contemporary equivalent among thoughtful people everywhere.

India, Hindu and non-Hindu, has, over its long history, often departed woefully from the central stream of its faith and tradition. But it still largely adheres to the belief that diversity is the norm, not uniformity; and to the belief that truth is too vast and complex to be the monopoly of any one. Even in our visible environment, the good Lord has not created only one kind of tree or one kind of animal or bird. Why, then, should there be one kind of religion, or race, or culture or anything?

It is a matter of some satisfaction that, notwithstanding the partition of India on the two-nation theory, this country still has the second largest Muslim population in the world after Indonesia. What is more, the Muslims of this country have not only more civil liberties (in common with the rest of the population) but even more religious liberties, than in some Muslim theocracies. The Hindu majority of this country has not yet put a Hindu religious party in power.

The belief in plurality and diversity, and not uniformity, as the norm is not a theoretical abstraction, but a practical principle of national life, and the very basis of our democracy and our society. To understand this, one has only to look at a sister country, with the same history, culture and background, which has declared in favour of uniformity, the country having been created for

the benefit of people of one religion. The first result of this restrictive philosophy was that people of other religions were eliminated. When there were thus no non-believers left to persecute, so-called heretics amongst the believers became the target. The next obvious stage was that those in power decreed the definitions of the true faith, to be accepted compulsorily by all.

A denial of the freedom of belief inevitably ends up circumscribing freedom in general. In rejecting whatever in culture or the arts of life is defined as outside the permitted interpretation of religion, they have also ended up with very little of a cultural identity left, as distinct from a religious identity which is defined in ever-narrowing terms. The fact is that intolerance does not depend on objective considerations. It is a subjective attitude, and it will find or create targets. There is a deep bond between religious fundamentalism and political fundamentalism—an intolerance of dissent, and an inevitable denial of freedom of thought and of action.

There are those amongst Hindus in this country who suffer from the kind of delusions that have led to the above results. Let there be no doubt whatsoever — Hinduism and bigotry are a contradiction in terms. Hinduism and a rejection of divergent faiths or beliefs, too, is a contradiction in terms. But at heart, the very notion of religion is irreconcilable with bigotry.

The mystics of all religions obviously had a great deal in common — a perception and a faith that pre-empted dogma. But all too often in history, including Indian history, particularly recent history, religion has been made the vehicle of other purposes. If the Inquisition was carried out in the name of a compassionate Christ who said, he who is without blame, let him cast the first stone — in India, in the name of religion we have produced untouchability, the massacres of 1947 and 1984, and many other horrors like *sati*, and human sacrifice, and now bride-burning

The great multiplicity of our

religions, cultures, languages and races have, over the centuries and after many conflicts and tribulations, built a unique, composite civilisation, rich and diverse, enlightened and all-embracing, where the plurality has been at the same time a corrective to each group of whatever kind, and a safeguard against an inward-looking bigotry, religious, racial or other. It has been an instrument of a universal outlook, which in this large country has created an even larger spiritual and intellectual horizon. But we are now deliberately converting this multiplicity, which is an advantage and safeguard, into a liability.

Our diversities on various planes are utilised to give respectability to multiple bigotries, with each group closing itself into an ever-tightening and inward-looking circle. Whereas our traditions are loaded in favour of a catholic outlook amongst the populace, our politics are built on the basis of an increasingly fierce and ruthless rivalry for power. It is a rivalry which leads the contenders to utilise the plurality of the nation as an instrument for building up sectoral support.

The politicians convert their personal rancour and hatreds into rivalries and bitterness amongst the various sections of the populace, ably assisted in this by those who are sworn to sectoral loyalties for their own purposes and who are to be found in every section of the population, justifying conflict with others. We are thus elevating hatred to the status of a national ideology. It is an exercise in which all will be losers.

Such an attitude shifts the emphasis from real religious belief to extraneous matters like group labels or rituals. It sets one group in conflict with another, creating a cycle of violence and a cult of brutality that endangers the very springs of our civilisation, and the basis of our existence as a nation. The people have to remain alert to these dangers, and work together to protect their pluralistic ethos.

The Hindus as a numerical majority have what, in effect, is a decisive role. We have only to look

at the undemocratic theocracies to see the decisive role that the numerical majority plays. If that continuous thread of serenity and wisdom, of *ahimsa* and of inclusiveness, which forms the core of Hindu tradition, has to survive, the Hindus have to work to protect it against the multiple onslaughts against it. That political gangsterism has a powerful role in strengthening the negative forces must be clearly recognised and tackled. The false counsellors who talk of Hindu dominance over the rest must be contained; for such dominance will be a de-facto theocracy which will, as is seen elsewhere, endanger its practitioners too. Let them not make the mistake of thinking that they are doing others a favour by fighting for the rights of all.

We need to do away with the present crude numerical definition of a nation in terms of 'majority' and 'minority'. It is a pernicious concept. In a composite civilisation like ours there can be no 'minority', any more than one colour in a rainbow is a minority. India will be immeasurably impoverished if we endanger and lose our diversity, our spirit of freedom, our boundless intellectual, cultural and spiritual horizons, all of which are closely linked and interdependent.

In our own times, the Hindu tradition produced a Gandhi — an individual who pitted his human dignity and his *ahimsa* against the might of an empire. He was possible only in our tradition, a tradition that also produced the following that sustained his leadership. He was a Hindu who declared that he was also a Muslim, a Christian, a Sikh and everything else. But we cannot forget that there is another kind of Hinduism which produced the fanaticism and violence that killed him.

No society is perfect. There will always be violence, exploitation, hatred, bigotry and injustice. Often they will use the appeal of religion to justify themselves. These negative forces must be kept under control, so that this country is safe for diversity and freedom, for democracy and progress, for peace and amity.

Anti-human

V.T. RAJSHEKAR

I WAS born a Hindu, a high caste *shudra*, but over the last 10 to 15 years, through my study, experience and my involvement in the Dalit movement, I am no more a Hindu. I am a human being. A Hindu can't be human.

The progress of any society depends on the value system of its people. The Indians being mainly Hindus possess not only a very dangerous value system but actually an anti-human one. And this value system is the product of the religion that governs them. Fortunately, a vast section of the low castes and tribals have not been influenced by these false values as they are not Hindus. But the Brahmins, forming the governing class of India, through the media they own, the history books they have written, the culture they control, manipulate the minds of almost the whole population. Since over 50 per cent of India's population lives below the poverty

line and over 70 per cent is totally illiterate, such manipulation becomes much easier.

If Indians are what they are today, it is only because of the intolerant Hindu religion practised by about 80 per cent of the Indian population, and its dangerous anti-human values. The correct name of Hinduism is Brahmanism, imported to India by the Aryan invaders. Hinduism, considered the world's most ancient religion, has no parallel in the world

A bundle of contradictions, a boneless wonder, words such as Hinduism, Hindus or Hindustan do not figure in the Sanskrit 'sacred scriptures' of Hindus. These texts do not even give a name to this religion. It has no founder. It has neither a church nor one single text like the Bible or the Koran.

The question: 'Who is a Hindu?' can be answered only in the nega-

tive: one who is not a Muslim, Christian or a Parsee is a Hindu. Its priests are unique in the world. They not only belong to one caste (Brahmans) but are hereditary. At least 95 per cent of the Hindus do not know their 'holy books'. A majority of them do not even regularly visit temples. At least 30 per cent of the Hindus are not admitted into the Hindu temples.

Therefore, Hinduism cannot be defined except that we can identify that a Hindu is one who is so by birth; if we go by that standard, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is not a Hindu. The caste system, of which untouchability is a part, is the foundation on which Hinduism is built. You remove caste and the Hindu edifice falls like a house of cards. So, every Hindu must have a caste. Without a caste there can be no Hindu. Nay, the caste system is the other name for Hinduism. Caste and untouchability are deathless because they have divine sanction. Even the Hindu gods belong to different castes. And one god fights with another god because of caste rivalry.

Hinduism is, therefore, a vast madhouse, the maddest house in the whole world. India, because of this has become a sick country and its sickness is affecting the health of other nations. The contagion has spread to Ceylon, Singapore, Malaysia, UK, Canada etc. True Hinduism is practised actually only by Brahmans who form the apex of the caste pyramid. They form not even 5 per cent of the Hindu population and yet as 'gods on earth' they control everything — all the property and privileges; more than that, they control the minds of the people. And, therefore, rightly they constitute India's 'ruling class', supplying every Prime Minister that India had (barring one for a very brief period) since 'Independence' including Mrs. Indira Gandhi and the half-Brahmin Rajiv Gandhi whose succession was settled only after the Shankaracharya of Kanchi cleared it.

Hinduism (its scientific name is Brahmanism) does not believe in individual conversion. It swallows a whole religion. It swallowed Bud-

dhism, Jainism, Veerashaivism. It was only when it tried to swallow Sikhism that the Sardarjis resisted it and the Brahmans taught a lesson to the Sikhs by sending the army into the Golden Temple and killing thousands of Sikhs and the latter retaliated by killing Indira Gandhi. None can rule India except the Brahman. This is the power that Hinduism has conferred on the Brahman.

Hinduism is so powerful that though a foreign religion, it devoured every protest movement including the most liberating Buddhism, which was destroyed and driven out of India over 2000 years back. Brahmans led by the Shankaracharya literally slaughtered Buddhists. Buddhism today reigns in other parts of the world but is not to be found inside India—except for the attempts made by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, the saviour of the Untouchables and the new rising star of India, at the end of his life by himself embracing Buddhism along with several millions of Untouchables.

Efforts are being made to strengthen Hinduism and the government itself is actively helping the process, making the Christians and Muslims nervous, convincing them that the government is pro-Hindu. A Hindu fundamentalist (Fascist) party called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is vigorously fanning communal flames and periodically resorting to the torture of Untouchables, Tribals, Muslims and Christians. Now Sikhs. The ultimate aim of the RSS is to clamp a class-caste fascist dictatorship, before which Hitler's Nazi rule would pale into insignificance, crush the Untouchables and castrate the minorities. In Kerala, the RSS is engaged in a battle with Marxists and several hundreds have already been killed. Brahmans themselves divide into two parties. The 'orthodox' section controls the RSS and 'progressives' are sent to head 'national' parties including the Communist parties. The understanding is that despite who wins, the Brahmans alone should rule.

Untouchables and tribes who together make a formidable one third of India's population are the origi-

nal inhabitants of this ancient country. But the invading Aryans drove them out and those who fled to hills and forests became tribes and those trapped but driven out of village limits became Untouchables.

The stigma of untouchability is not confined to Untouchables alone. Women become untouchables during menstruation. In fact, one caste is untouchable to the other Hindu caste — in an ascending order of reverence and a descending degree of contempt. But those called 'Harijans', meaning 'children of God' in the words of Gandhi, suffer not merely from untouchability, but unapproachability, unseeability, unshadowability, unspeakability, unthinkable etc. Dogs and cats are let inside the Hindu house but not an Untouchable.

Therefore, every village in Hindu India has become a ghetto, the worst part reserved for those born bonded slaves who are expected to render free service to the Hindus without expecting anything in return. They do all the menial jobs: cleaning, sweeping, scavenging, tanning, agricultural operations, carrying dead cattle and eating its carcass. Barbers, washermen, shoe-makers, house builders. Every dirty job. While the men are Untouchables, the women can be enjoyed by the high caste Hindus. This is the concept of Hindu justice. Hindu temples are surrounded by unmarried Devadasi girls dedicated to gods, meaning the 'gods on earth'.

Socialism has no place under Hinduism. But the country's Constitution has forced the government to introduce some socialist reforms. So we live under serious contradictions and a perpetual clash between the fascist ideology of Hinduism and the socialist slogans of the government. The Constitution has given the Untouchables paper 'reservations' in jobs etc.

Untouchability among Hindus is thus a unique phenomenon unknown to humanity in any other part of the world. Nothing like it is to be found in any other society — primitive, ancient or modern. The journalists, sociologists and historians of India are not interested in the problems

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of Untouchables or the havoc of caste because they all belong to the high castes — which helped them to get to their positions. So why would they criticise it?

The first organised protest movement against Brahmanism was launched by the Buddha and Untouchables joined it *en masse*. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar claimed that before the Aryans invaded India, the language of India was Tamil. He said the war between Buddhism and Brahmanism and the defeat of the former resulted in its followers being driven out of the village limits. Brahmins who were the enemies of Buddhism adopted the trick of sabotaging Buddhism by infiltrating it. They conducted a war against Buddhism both from within and without. Adi Shankara personally supervised the killing of Buddhists in many parts of India. And after vanquishing Buddhism, the Aryans inflicted untouchability upon those defeated.

Another ingenious method the Brahmins adopted to destroy Buddhism was to give up beef-eating and become strict vegetarians. The Brahmins were the most gluttonous beef-eaters and the Vedic texts have any number of references to their indiscriminate killing of cows and eating them. Killings brought them joy. In fact, the cow was reserved for the Brahmin stomach.

The Brahmins also excelled in drinking intoxicating liquor and merry-making. When the Brahmins gave up eating beef, other Hindus also followed them. If the non-Brahmins underwent one revolution by giving up beef-eating, Brahmins underwent a double revolution. They gave up meat-eating for the first time and became vegetarians. 'To my mind, it was the strategy which made the Brahmins give up beef-eating and start worshipping the cow. The clue to the worship of cow is to be found in the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism and the means adopted by Brahmanism to establish its supremacy over Buddhism.' (Dr. Ambedkar, *Untouchables*, pg. 151).

Why did the Brahmins resort to such a reckless adventure, a supreme

sacrifice of giving up the greatest pleasure in their life? Ambedkar says: 'Without becoming vegetarians, the Brahmins could not have recovered the ground they had lost in its revival, namely Buddhism.' (*Ibid*, page 154).

Brahmins who have beaten everybody in the world in cunning and craftiness, deceit and treachery wanted to beat extremism by extremism. It is a fantastic strategy. The only way to beat Buddhism was to go one step forward and become vegetarians. Today Brahmins (barring those in Kashmir and Bengal) are pure vegetarians and non-drinkers.

Non-violence was absorbed into Brahmanism which from the day of the defeat of Buddhism came to be called Hinduism. The Vedic religion of Brahmanism was sacrificed to save Brahmins, to destroy the revolutionary philosophy of Buddhism and the perfect democracy and supremacy of women enjoyed in tribal society that was pre-Aryan and, thus, permanently condemn India to slavery and serfdom. That is how India, which has the world's largest but the most famished cattle population, turned into a cow-worshipper as a result of the triumph of Brahmanism over Buddhism. It was the means Brahmins adopted to regain their lost glory.

This supreme sacrifice of the Brahmins proves that they were prepared to go to any extreme and make any compromise to save Brahmanism. Even Guru Golwalkar, the RSS philosopher, admits that Hindus invited every foreign invader so as to settle scores with their neighbours. To them, Brahmanism was more important than India. Every foreign invader was invited by them to serve their selfish ends. India today is one of the poorest countries of the world (11th poorest as per the latest World Bank report), a sick nation, because of Brahmanism. Not only to save the Untouchables, but if India itself has to be saved, Brahmanism will have to be destroyed. That is why the Untouchables and tribals being the original owners of India, have decided to escape from the tyranny of Brahmanism.

The Hindu fundamentalists now led by the RSS often boast about 'Indian nationalism'. They are spending a lot of money and time to rouse this 'national patriotism' among Hindus. But are the Indians a nation?

The individual religious groups — Muslims, Christians and Sikhs — constitute a different but perpetually warring nation. Muslims (15 per cent) and Christians (3 per cent), Sikhs (2½ per cent) are being persecuted by the Hindu brute majority. Apart from this, the Untouchables (20 per cent) and tribes (10 per cent) each constitute a separate nation. The Sikhs too. Besides, each caste is a separate nation within Hinduism.

Hinduism is thus a vast prison-house of warring nationalities. Nationality is a social feeling. It is a longing not to belong to any other group. This is the essence of what is called a nationality and national feeling. But in India, race, language and country do not suffice to create a nation. A nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. 'Suffering in common is a greater bond of union than joy. As regards national memories, mournings are worth more than triumphs, for they impose duties, they demand common effort.' (Renan quoted by Dr. Ambedkar in his book, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, Thacker and Co., 2nd edition — 1945, page. 17).

As consciousness increases along with literacy and other factors, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and each caste within Hinduism will clamour for separateness and some people expect India to be torn to pieces in course of time. Before the British came to India, this sub-continent had several 'nations'. And after the British left, we got divided (Pakistan, Bangla Desh) and could be further divided because Hinduism preaches hatred.

The Untouchables of India constitute the worst form of apartheid. The Negroes are employed as household servants in 'white' houses and, therefore, they are not untouchables. But India's Untouchables are kept outside, segregated in all areas: their very touch, look, even thought leads to pollution. A 'black' man

can be recognised by the colour of his skin but not so the Untouchable. He may be fairer than the Brahman. So nobody can identify an Untouchable by mere skin-colour.

Therefore, Indian untouchability like the Black problem is not a problem arising out of colour prejudice. It is a mental problem created by the caste system. That makes it the most serious problem in the whole world. But, also, no world body, the UNO, International Court of Justice, Human Rights Commission or anybody for that matter, has ever bothered about the Untouchables who in sheer numbers exceed the American Negroes or for that matter the Palestinians or any other struggling groups. Therefore, it is a world problem of the greatest importance and the highest priority.

While every other country in the world (barring Communist countries) is divided into rich and poor (class division to put it in Marxian terminology), India has not only its rich and poor but also its high and low castes. That means in India the people are not only divided horizontally as rich and poor, but also vertically into high and low caste — one cutting across the other. That means the Brahman belonging to the highest caste may be poor but an Untouchable minister like Jagjivan Ram may be quite rich. This is the most baffling problem faced by any country in the world.

If other countries have to destroy only the 'classes', we in India have the twin menace of 'class' and 'caste'. Since the loyalty of both the rich and the poor are first to their caste, it is difficult to unite the poor of a caste against the rich of their own caste. The frequent 'caste wars' in India have conclusively proved that the poor Hindus will not join hands with Untouchables — who are economically the poorest and socially the lowest. Apart from caste, language divisions, we also have sexual segregation. Women have no status in India.

Therefore, India presents a paradox where no general mobilisation of the poor is possible. This is how

Marx failed in Hindu India. Even Buddhism, Christianity and Sikhism have not escaped caste divisions because originally they were also Hindus.

Sociologists by and large endorse our opinion that in India* 'caste' is a 'class'. A mobile caste is a class. The low castes are all poor and higher castes are generally the rich. But it can be said with confidence that in India it will not be possible to launch a 'class struggle' without first destroying caste. At least a simultaneous thrust: a 'class-caste struggle' has to be launched. But our Marxist comrades do not agree with us. The Hindus are also not prepared for this. Since Hinduism is the other name for the caste system, any attack on caste means a direct assault on the property and privileges that caste brings. Since every caste and sub-caste stands to benefit from this grand system, no Hindu is prepared to give it up.

The high caste Hindus made a lot of noise over the mass conversion of Untouchables to Islam. To prevent it they said they wanted to destroy untouchability. Hindu leaders including M.K. Gandhi said that they wanted to eradicate untouchability. But nobody complained against the caste system. Because they know that untouchability being part of the caste system, it is not possible to remove untouchability alone without destroying the caste system, which in turn means destroying Hinduism. So when M.K. Gandhi and other Hindu leaders talked against untouchability, they were not sincere. Gandhi, whom Ambedkar described as a Hindu leader and the Enemy No. 1 of Untouchables, wanted only a patchwork solution. Gandhi was content with mere reform but Ambedkar wanted revolution and asked the Dalits to quit Hinduism and go in for conversion.

India being one of the poorest countries in the world, all the factors necessary for revolution exist here. The Marxist parties are about 50 years old and a force to be reckoned with. But the country is nowhere near a revolution. This is because

*The Dilemma of Class & Caste — V.T. Rajshekar — DSA 1984 109/7th Cross, Palace Lower Orchards, Bangalore-560003.

the Marxist leadership is in the hands of the Brahmans who are not really ready to launch a struggle to destroy caste as it will affect the property and privileges of their caste. And without destroying caste, it is not possible to destroy 'class'. They are not prepared to combine the caste struggle with the class struggle.

The Untouchables and tribals are born revolutionaries. Nobody wants revolution more urgently than these two sections. But the Marxists have no programme to attract them. The Left parties do not inspire these revolutionary sections. And quite a number of them not only feel that Marxists in India are far from revolution but are actually counter-revolutionaries.

As the Marxists have betrayed the revolution, Untouchables are forced to take the only other path available — a religious solution. Thousands of Untouchables and tribes, therefore, have embraced Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam and the flow is increasing.

It is to be noted that the Untouchables of India are subjected to torture not because they are poor. They are any number of poor in India and Untouchables are only a part of them. The country itself has over 50 per cent living below the poverty line. But why are the Untouchables alone subjected to torture? Not because of their poverty, but because of their degrading social status. So the problem of exploitation and poverty in India is due to social causes and not economic factors. The main cause of India's poverty is, therefore, social and only next to it, economic.

Since the social degradation of the Untouchables has religious sanction under Hinduism, the Untouchables have no other course but to get out of this gas chamber of Hinduism and seek fresh air under other liberating religions: Christianity, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, etc. Therefore, conversion to other religions has become popular among the Untouchables and *shudras*. Not that after conversion to Christianity and Islam the problem of poverty would be solved. To them poverty is not

their No. 1 problem. Man cannot live by bread alone. He wants self-respect which is denied under Hinduism. The Untouchables will get it the moment they get out of Hinduism and convert to other religions.

Untouchables have discovered that conversion helps them as they will no longer be subjected to atrocities. Conversion to other religions, therefore, helps the Untouchable *shudra* to destroy caste, paving the way or rather helping him to get on to the next phase: class struggle.

Ambedkar chose Buddhism after thinking for twenty long years on the subject but unfortunately Buddhism, having been considered a part of Hinduism, has proved ineffective in destroying untouchability because those who embraced Buddhism along with Ambedkar are still treated as Untouchables by the Hindus. So the Untouchables mostly prefer Christianity and lately in one State, Tamil Nadu, the trend is towards Islam.

The sickness of Hinduism is so contagious that it has not spared any other religion. Those who went over to Christianity carried their caste with them and we have evidence that to gain more members, the Church leaders allowed the converts to keep their caste identity. Even today there are separate graveyards in the Church for Untouchable converts.

But there is one thing: Christianity or Islam do not sanction caste distinction. Anybody fighting against caste within the Church or Islam, will get the support of their religion. But not so under Hinduism. That is why inside the Church in India, there is a powerful movement to fight caste discrimination. Despite caste distinctions, the Untouchable converts to Christianity are today emotionally and psychologically much better off than their counterparts who preferred to stay behind in Hinduism.

The latest trend towards Islam in Tamil Nadu, the southern-most State of India, is a new development that has rattled the Hindu clergy.

Mass conversion to Islam is not new to this area but the orthodox Hindus and the fundamentalist party, the RSS, are worried about this trend because a Hindu considers Islam the most inveterate enemy of Brahmanism. Islam has no caste distinctions. The Untouchables are attracted to it because of its egalitarianism. Even some Christian converts have opted for Islam.

Hinduism, therefore, is not only anti-democratic but anti-human. Even the Brahmans, the custodians of Hinduism, have not benefited materially from this suffocating religion. Hundreds of Brahmans have fled 'holy' India and settled in unholy beef-eating US, UK and the Gulf countries. Quite a number of them are still complaining of their own poverty in India.

Foreigners are likely to be deceived by the propaganda of non-violence, the Gandhian *ahimsa*. But as representatives of the Untouchables, we would like to blast this myth. Nowhere in the world can we get a set of people who are more violent and blood-thirsty than the Hindus. What happened in Delhi after Indira Gandhi's death proves this.

Hinduism is no doubt dying. It is sinking under its own weight. Christianity and Islam have a better future in India. Urbanisation and scientific development have set fire to the very citadel of Brahmanism. But what keeps the dying Hinduism alive are the two main props of the caste system and the Karma theory — the belief in rebirth, predestiny.

The Hindus talk about democracy and socialism but 'majority rule' in India has resulted in majority tyranny on the minorities who are reduced to the level of second-rate citizens—a persecuted minority, which can plunge India into a bloody communal and caste war. The Untouchables and tribals of India are so weak — socially, economically, culturally, politically and even physically — that they no longer have the patience to wait for a revolution, which has proved elusive. Therefore, instead of waiting endlessly for the revolution, they have decided to seek their own solution to their problem.

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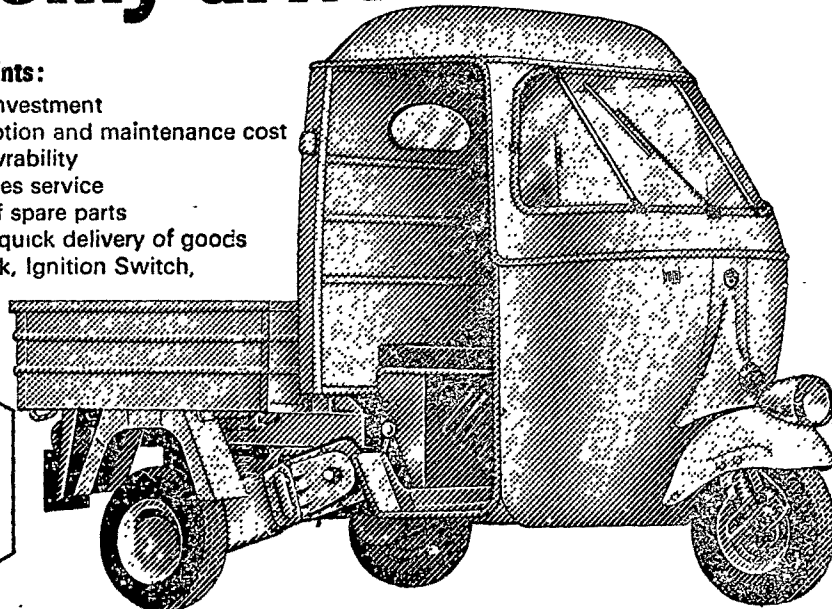
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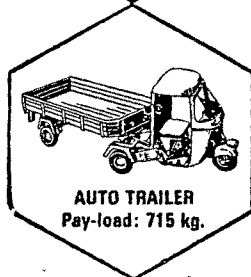
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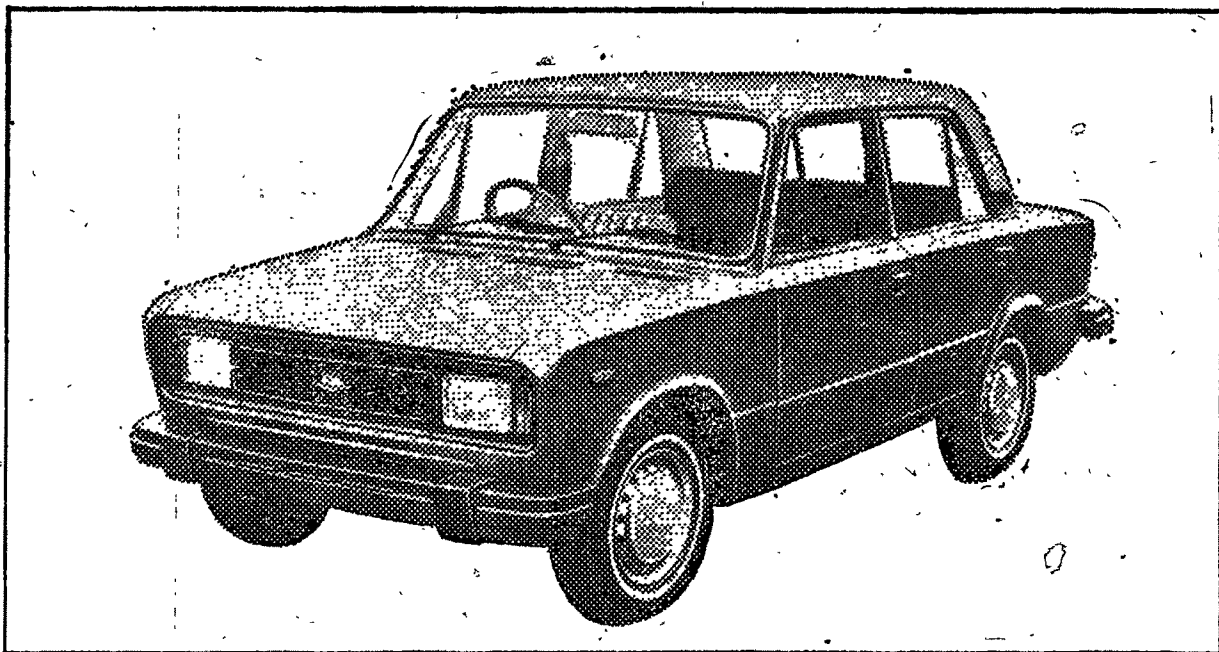
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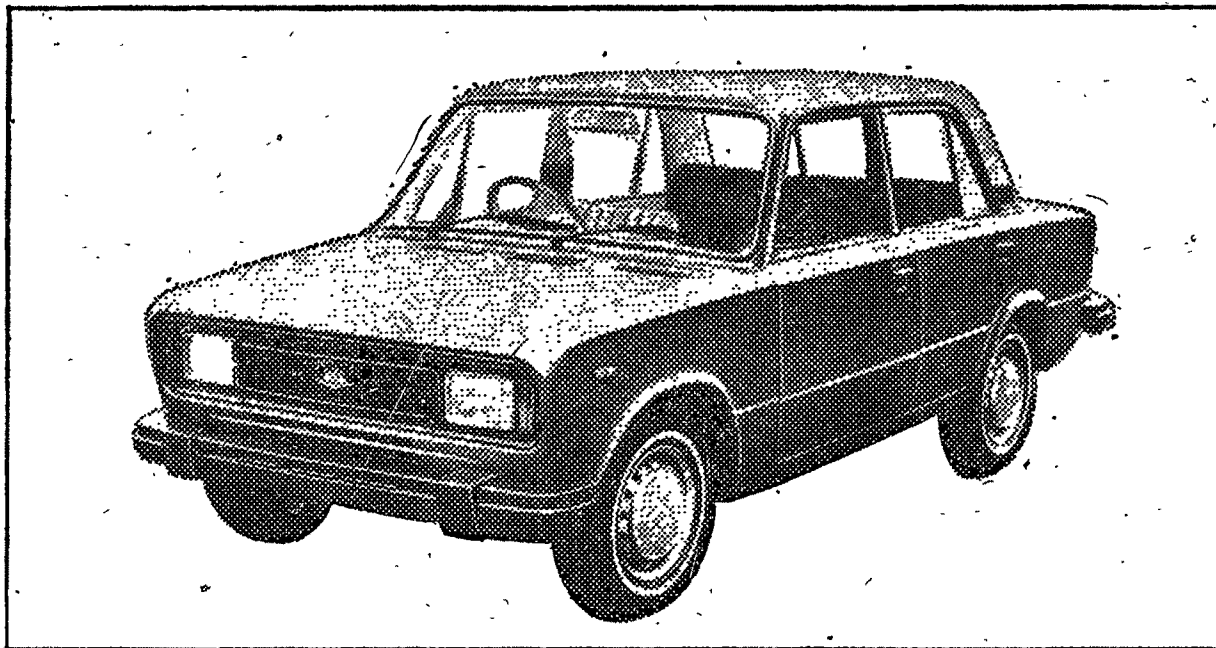
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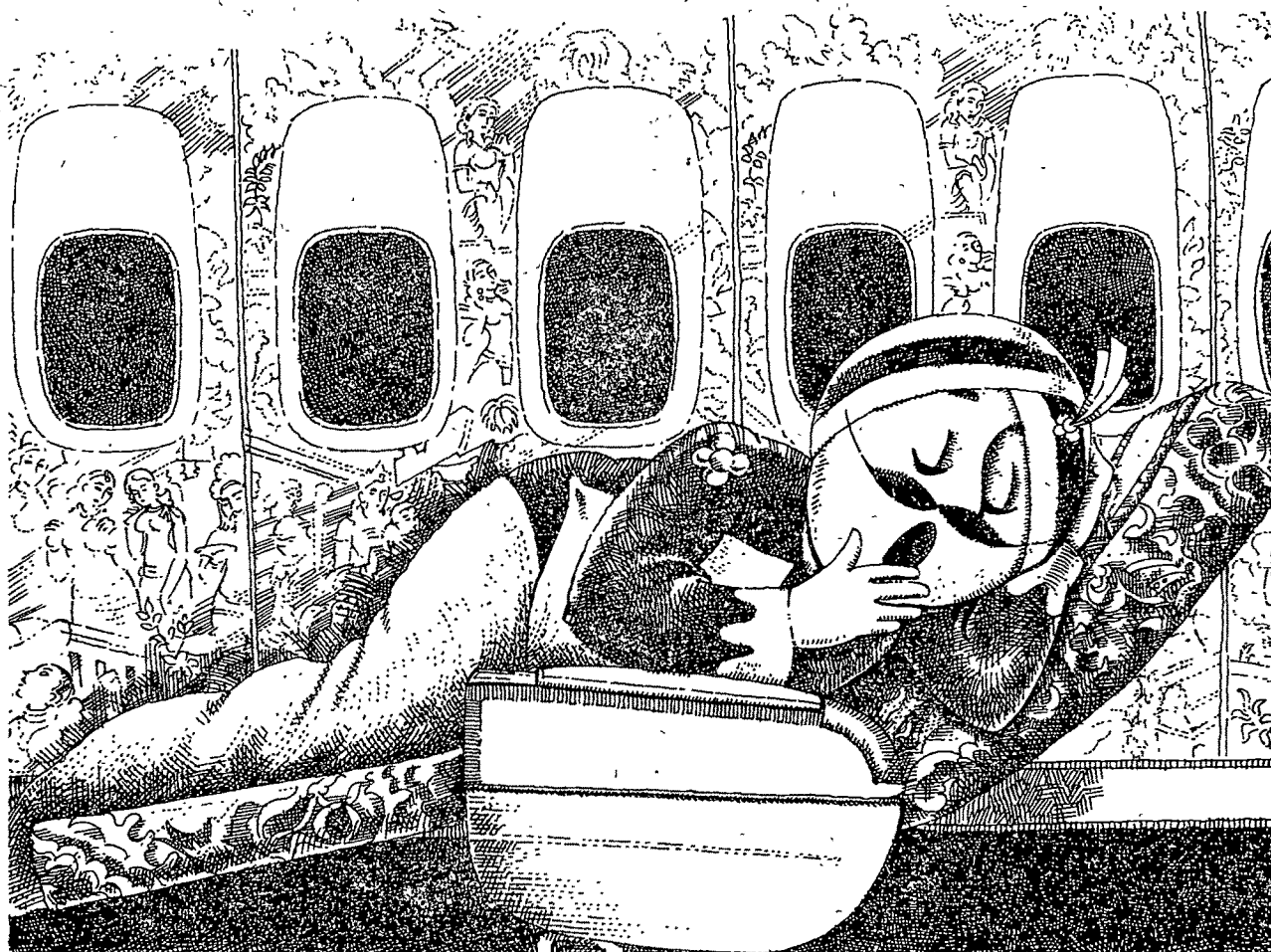
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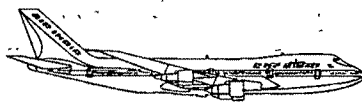
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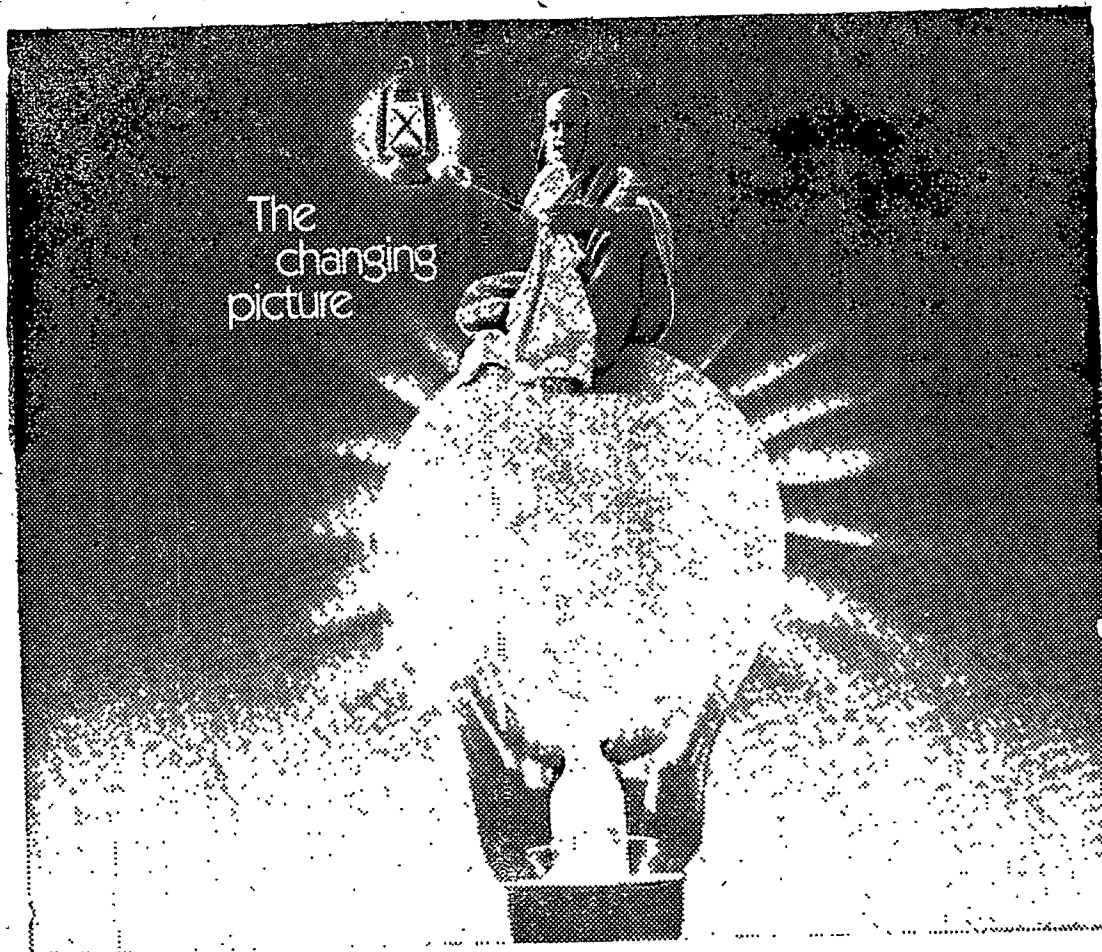
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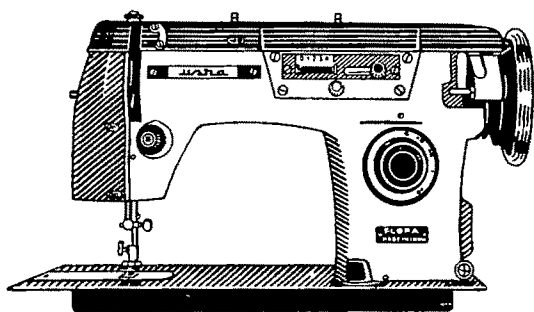
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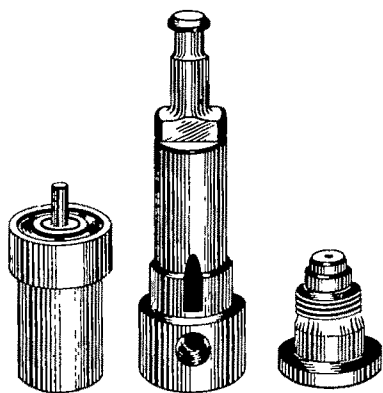


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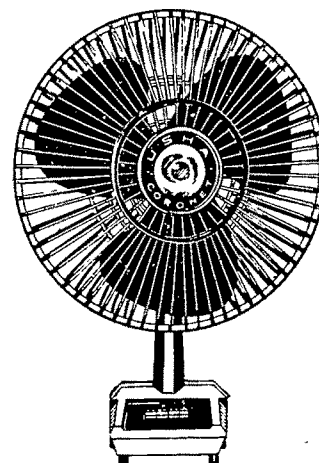
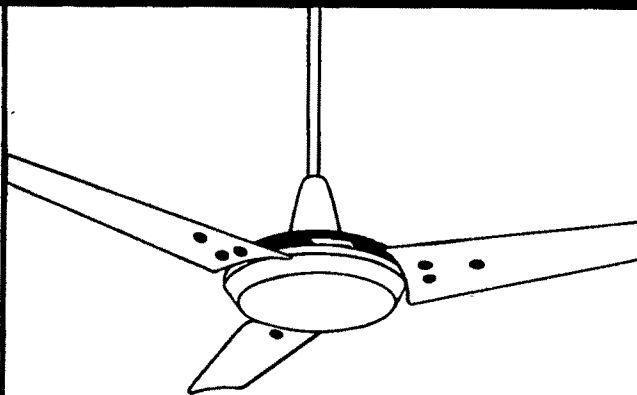
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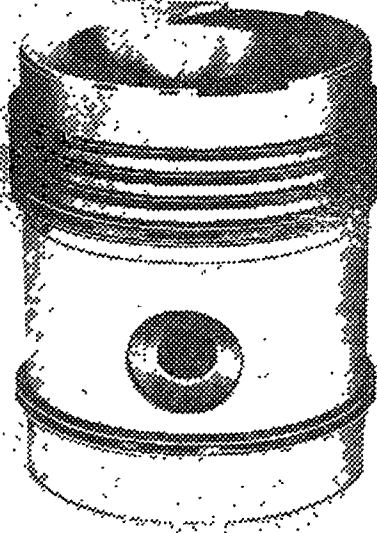
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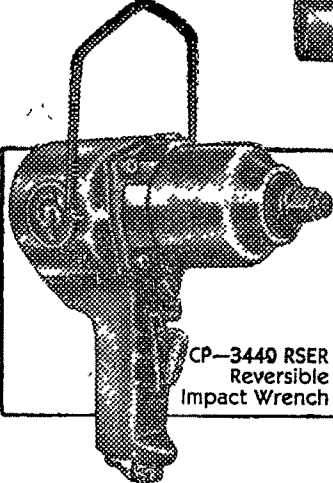


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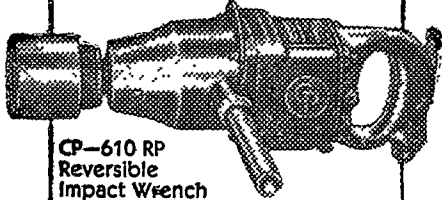
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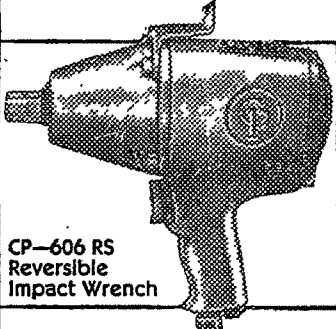
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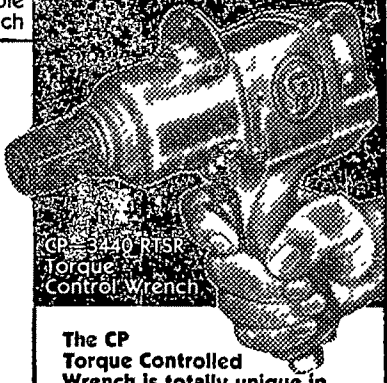


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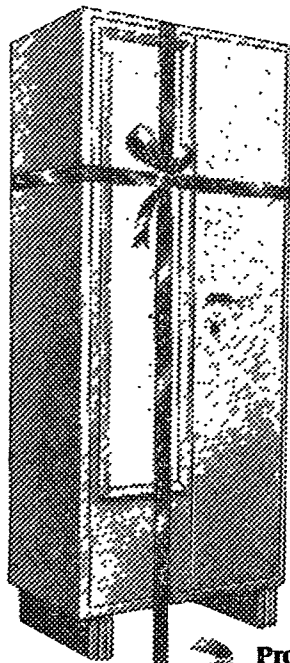
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NEXT MONTH: PATTERNS OF POLITICS

314

ISSUES WITHIN ISSUES

a symposium on

some emerging

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THE PROBLEM

A short statement
of the issues involved

AN ANTI-SECULARIST MANIFESTO

Ashis Nandy, Senior Fellow, Centre
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Reviewed by Amrik Singh, Sujata Varadarajan,
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COVER

Designed by Madhu Chowdhury of
Dilip Chowdhury Associates

The problem

SOLUTIONS to many of the problems that besieged India at Independence have remained elusive. At the forefront of these has been the nagging persistence of poverty as also the clashing rise of community and religious identities. With every step forward a host of other, unsuspected problems have revealed themselves which in turn have led to much speculation on the validity of the concepts that we took to ourselves.

It is not something we need be afraid of. This was bound to happen. The error is in not facing up to the problems, in not admitting to the mistakes made, thereby not searching for further solutions, or implementing them, or throwing them out if they do not serve the purpose. It has to be a continuing activity.

India is not singled out in this process. Even the United Nations after forty years of its existence is in the same state of creeping impotence.

If impotence is not to overwhelm us, we must keep looking for the issues within the issues, even if this effort becomes as obsessive or as torturous as looking for needles in a haystack, probing deeper and deeper into causes of failures, emphasising re-analysis.

In this issue of SEMINAR we have a background piece which attempts to search yet again for the reasons which have led to Punjab's trauma, another which traces the relationship between growth and poverty, and wonders whether the two aggravate each other or complement each other. A third looks at our concept of secularism, how it has been thwarted and twisted out of shape by politics to emerge mangled all over the Indian sub-continent. The fourth relates to the global scene, for we are not alone in our folly.

An anti-secularist manifesto

ASHIS NANDY

GANDHI said he was secular. Yet he thought poorly of those who wanted to keep religion and politics separate. Those who believed in such separation, he said, understood neither religion nor politics.

This contradiction has its roots in two meanings of secularism current in contemporary India. The first meaning is known to every modern westerner; the second is an Indianism which has no place either in the Oxford English dictionary or in the Webster. According to the first, religious tolerance could come only from the devaluation of religion in public life and from the freeing of politics from religion. The less politics is contaminated by religion, this argument goes, the more secular or tolerant a State you will have. The word secular here is opposite of the word sacred.

According to its second meaning, secularism is not the opposite of the word sacred but that of ethnocentrism, xenophobia and fanaticism. One could be a good secularist by being equally disrespectful towards all religions or by being equally respectful towards them. And true secularism, the second meaning insists, must opt for respect. It is this non-modern meaning of secularism which anti-colonial India stressed, given its concerns with mass mobilisation and a broad consensus against the British rule.

The meaning recognises that even when a State is tolerant of religions, it need not lead to religious tolerance in a society. For, tolerance by the State cannot guarantee tolerance by the society. State tolerance may ensure, in the short run, the survival of a political community; in the long run the community must go beyond it. This meaning of secularism recognises covertly what we are

now finding out painfully, namely, that the growth of vested interests in a secular public sphere is an insufficient basis for the long-term survival of a political community. Otherwise the Scots and the Welsh or, for that matter, the Sikhs and the Assamese would not be creating so many problems for their countries.

Previously, thanks to a number of fortunate circumstances, one could follow the logic of the second, more local, meaning of secularism in Indian politics while paying lip-service to the first. In recent years, the nature of the democratic process in India is forcing the political actors to choose between the two meanings.

First, the condition of the Indian State is such today that to advise the religious traditions to abide by values derived from the Indian State is likely to fall on deaf ears. Few will believe that Hinduism, Sikhism or Islam has any moral lesson to learn from the Indian State. For the same reason, the hope that the State can be an impartial arbiter among different religious communities in its present state appears a rather pallid one.

Second, in spite of the tremendous growth in the power of the State in India, sensitive political analysts as well as activists are in no doubt as to who or what will be abolished if the Indian nation-State today takes on the task of abolishing religious and cultural identities. The secularisation of the Indian State has gone far but there are limits to its capacity to secularise the society. (As I am primarily writing for the modern English-speaking gentry, I shall use the word 'secularism' in its proper English sense in the rest of this essay and forget the other secularism as an improper Indianism.)

The awareness of these issues has created problems for our concept of the State in India. Since about the seventeenth century, the modern ideology of the State has wanted the State to be secular by separating religion and politics. Since we first began to borrow the ideology in the third decade of the last century, it has also dominated the modern Indian consciousness. And we, too, have systematically tried to separate religion from politics. This, in spite of many like Gandhi trying to be 'secular' by bringing the right kind of religion and the right kind of politics together.

Now we suddenly confront the embarrassing fact that not only many Indians but a significant proportion of humankind have become suspicious of the western concept of secularism and become receptive to a non-secular concept of religious and cultural tolerance.

To understand the nature of this response we have to first recognise that modern nation-States, being by definition suspicious of the presence of culture in politics and trying to carve out a sphere of the State where only the values of statecraft will rule, works with the following ordering of the citizen (I also give examples from Indian public life):

<i>nonbeliever in public and private</i> (Jawaharlal Nehru, M.N. Roy)	<i>nonbeliever in public; believer in private</i> (Vallabhbhai Patel, Indira Gandhi)	<i>believer in public; non-believer in private</i> (M.A. Jinnah, D.V. Savarkar)	<i>believer in private and public</i> (M.K. Gandhi)
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In other words, to the ideologues of the modern State system, the ideal political man is someone like Nehru or Roy. And they believe that, given the ineluctable laws of social progress, more and more citizens will enter the first category, to shed, as a first step, their religious beliefs in public and, then, as a second step, their beliefs in private.

This hierarchy of citizens, which persists in spite of the official and unofficial veneration of Gandhi as the father of the Indian nation, follows naturally from the modern ideology of secularism and provides the basis of the Indian State's claim to a monopoly on religious and ethnic tolerance. At the level of the

person, such tolerance is definitionally the prerogative of one who has some western education and some exposure to the modern culture and the modern idiom of politics.

A Gandhian criticism of the approach could be three-fold. First, that it ignores the finer differences within traditions, while playing up such differences within the modern culture. It ignores that some forms of religion do lead to intolerance, other forms do not. Thus, while the approach draws a line between vulgar Marxism and non-vulgar Marxism and one between a vulgar West and a non-vulgar West, it refuses to draw a line between vulgar religion and non-vulgar religion or between tolerant and intolerant forms of culture.

Often, such secularism — I shall call it official secularism — goes farther. It compares the ideals of modernity with realities of religions and cultures. Thus, the ideals of modern politics are compared with the realities of the caste system (to show how bad the latter is) the way many zealous apologists of Hinduism compare the ideals of the caste system against the realities of hierarchical modern bureaucracy (to

show how good the former is).

Second, official secularism tries to limit the democratic process by truncating the political personality of the citizen. While the personality of those within the fully secular, modern sector is well-represented in the democratic order, those outside the modern sector have only a part of their selves represented in politics. The other part they have to carefully keep outside the public sphere.

This, of course, means that the creative role which politics might play within a religious or cultural tradition, by playing up some sub-traditions against the others or by reordering the hierarchy of subtra-

ditions, is pre-empted. Instead of a dialogue between the public and the private within a person, and between politics and culture—the two spheres are rigidly separated and the latter is frozen in time. As a result, the religious and cultural traditions are forced to become, as the moderns invariably accuse them of being, status quoist. This does not of course keep religion out of politics; it only means politics enters it by a different route. We shall return to this point.

Third, official secularism fails to take into account the politics of cultures today. It sees the believer as a person with an inferior political consciousness and it celebrates the fact that we live more and more in a world where all faiths and cultures, except modernity, are in recession. Such secularism fails to sense that critical social consciousness, if it is not to become a reformist sect within modernity, must respect and build upon the faiths and the visions that have refused to adapt to the modern worldview.

I have spoken of the growing marginalisation of religions, cultures and visions. This may seem odd at a time when the secularists are obviously having a hard time. In Lebanon, Quebec, Scotland and Basque—and in Punjab, Assam, Sri Lanka and Sind in this subcontinent itself—ethnicity is challenging established modern nationalism; racism is on the rise in parts of the liberal first world; and the Church is ascendant in parts of the super-secular second. Even in societies not torn by ethnic passions, a new cultural pride and exclusivism are visible. American Blacks and Hispanics are examples.

Though often viewed as unique, the self-affirmation of parts of the Muslim world can also be seen as a part of this larger picture. The Muslims now find themselves at the centre of the world stage precisely because for long they were treated as the et-ceteras and and-so-forths of the world, whereas their ethnic self-affirmation is now backed by wealth and a new capacity to be a political nuisance.

This is not the world where one can talk glibly about the marginal-

isation of faith. Yet, the fact remains that the affirmation of religion in our times has gone hand in hand with the erosion of religions; exactly as the victory of the idea of the nation-State has coextended with a new cultural and psychological crisis in the modern nation-State system. The two crises however become one in the third world, and each society in our part of the world is faced with a dilemma.

On the one hand, the existing hierarchy of nations and the cultural domination of the modern West have created a new concern for, and defensiveness about, non-modern cultures. Modernity no longer looks like something in the distant future; it is now hegemonic globally.

This sensitivity to the power of modernity has been sharpened by the Orwellian awareness that one by one the main modern theories of man-made suffering and this-worldly liberation have themselves been coopted by new forces of oppression; these theories themselves now legitimise new forms of greed, violence and obscurantism. In such a world, the older objectivist interpretations of religious intolerance are bound to look incapable of handling the need for survival, with justice and dignity, of many cultural groups.

On the other hand, the pathologies of religion have become more obvious, due to the greater visibility of many forms of religion and due to the attempts to empower some of them. Even in the few third world polities where democratic participation has expanded, religion has ridden piggy-back on the newly politicised to enter visible politics and move centre stage. Democratisation and politicisation have not eliminated religion from politics; they have given xenophobic and anti-democratic forms of religion new power and salience. On the one hand is Coca Cola, on the other Ayatollah Khomeini. The choice, even in this terribly crude formulation, is painful.

II

The modern concept of secularism in India, I have already said, is bor-

rowed from western history and it has a clear normative component: religion and ethnicity should be banished from the public sphere and an area should be marked out in politics where rationality, contractual social relationships, and *realpolitik* would reign. This sanitised sphere of politics may throw up rulers who are believers, but if it does do so, these leaders should be weak, secret or apologetic believers. It also follows from the same normative frame that in open societies, some citizens may chose their leaders on religious grounds or the leaders may exploit this weakness of the citizens, but both sides—the leaders and the led—should be embarrassed about this state of affairs and know the limits of their game.

Thus, a section of the Indian citizenry too feels more at home with a temple-going prime minister such as Indira Gandhi, the same way a section of the American public applauds a church-going president and sees him as potentially more honest or straight-forward. Yet, most vocal Hindu Indians will be shocked if Nepal is declared a natural ally of India because it is the world's only Hindu Kingdom.

There is a tacit theory behind this ambivalence to religion which cuts across nearly all State-centred ideologies in the Indian polity. It posits two secular trends in history: (1) the gradual erosion of faith and culture because of the growth of science, rationality and modern education and (2) the consequent expansion of an area of homogenous, universal, contractual, impersonal, public sphere where only values like self-interest, *realpolitik* and national security rule. The theory is an indirect plea to educate, guide and 'break in' the citizenry into this secular sphere; the sphere of *raj-dharma*, with the help of a modern vanguard acting as a pace setter in matters of social change.

The vanguard sets the pace by exercising its political choices in a rational and, hence, moral fashion from the point of view of the State. It may not be the Christian, the Hindu or the Islamic concept of morality, the theory goes, but it is morality all right; it is the morality

of modern State-craft. In other words, the vanguard sets the pace by being a collection of exemplary persons who live with their fellow-humans without illusions, yet ethically, and by building their ethics not on myths or compassion but on scientific rationality, history and reasons of the State.

It should be admitted straight-away that, howsoever limited its concept of human nature, howsoever contemptuous its attitude to the ethnic peripheries reportedly waiting to be conscientised out of their illusions, such secularism has served the Indian citizenry reasonably well for long periods of time, especially so in the early years after Independence under the easy, benign modernist, Jawaharlal Nehru.

At the time, political mobilisation, in spite of the existence of a powerful nationalist movement since the twenties, was still at a manageably low level. The Indian power elite was choosy about whom it admitted to the highest levels of the government, and the memory of what could be done in the name of religion in public life was fresh in the minds of the citizens.

There was a wide consensus that an area of sanity had to be maintained in the polity, community-based nepotism had to be contained, confidence had to be created in the new political institutions and in the impartiality of the peace-keeping forces. Above all, there was a consensus which acknowledged—against the beliefs of the various forms of liberal, Fabian and Marxist ideologies which informed the ruling ideology of the Indian State—that Hindu and Islamic exclusivism and zealotry were the strongest among the urban middle classes, not among the so-called peripheries of the country, and therefore the main battle against religious and ethnic conflicts had to be fought among the middle classes which dominated the Indian political consciousness. The secularisation of Indian politics, so far as it involved mainly the middle classes, did hold such conflicts in check.

That consensus and that strategy have gone as far as they could have.

They have now not only begun to break down but to work against many forms of ethnic tolerance. First, political participation has grown enormously, thanks to the eight general and innumerable local elections and thanks to the way politics has entered virtually every sphere of Indian life. No longer is it possible to screen those entering politics for their commitment to modern secular ethics. This is another way of saying that democratisation itself has set limits on the secularisation of Indian politics. The new entrants, coming from what was, until recently, part of the ethnic 'backwaters' of India, have given Indian democracy its power and resilience?

Second, partly negating the first process, the new entrants carrying their religion or ethnicity into their politics have self-consciously begun to shed their ethnic consciousness while retaining their ethnic links. These links they use in a secular fashion for electoral, especially factional ends. That is, they end up by joining the third category of political participants (exemplified by persons like Jinnah and Savarkar) rather than the first or the second (exemplified by Nehru and Indira Gandhi respectively). Instead of the religious use of politics, they make political use of religion, turning it into an instrument of political mobilisation within a psephocratic model—a model in which elections and elected 'kings' dominate the system.

Thus religion, as a repository or expression of cultural values, no longer remains available for checking the pure politics of public life, often seen by the newly politicised as an area where only the laws of the jungle apply. All this is another way of saying that there is now a peculiar double-bind in Indian politics: the ills of religion have found political expression but the strengths of it have not been available for checking corruption and violence in public life.

Third, self-doubts have arisen in many modern Indians because the older concept of secularism has been losing its shine since the late sixties in exactly those countries which were said to be way ahead of India

on the road to secularisation and nation-building. The positivist, science-centred ideologies of nationality and the conservative and radical theories of progress have come under attack there as the new opiates of the masses which allow the ruling classes to hand over the State to the technocrats and to the controllers of mass media.

After rejecting and very nearly defeating religion as a false consciousness in society after society in the first and second worlds, the social critics and activists there have found that the secular State has begun to claim—along with its new priestly classes like the scientists, the bureaucrats and the development experts—exactly the same blind faith from its followers as the church once did. It has begun to equip itself with the technological means to be omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent, God itself. In the north that process is called scientific advancement, in the south development.

All these experiences have been unkind to the modern secularists in India. Recently, they have been subjected to further stress because, as a part of secularisation itself, the private lives of politicians have become public property. Jawaharlal Nehru, it now turns out, was a votary of astrology and a sneaking Hindu in personal life; Subhas Chandra Bose was a Gita-devouring crypto-sannyasi; and by now it is well-known that Indira Gandhi, that open worshipper of the secular Indian nation-State, did not like to miss a *havan* or pilgrimage, given a half chance.

Even the implicit, third model of secularism used by the *bete noire* of Indian secularists, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, is in crisis today. Most well-known Indian secularists of the recent decades, by their personal faith, would have put Jinnah to shame, who in private life was a nonbeliever. But Jinnah made a rather profitable mix of private agnosticism and public religiosity, which of course was the exact reverse of the dominant mode of linking religion to politics in Indian nationalism: private faith and public non-belief. Jinnah's goal was to create a political culture in Pakistan which

ultimately, he hoped, would gradually delink Islam from the Pakistani State; confine it to private life, and then move towards a secular modern State where a highly westernised, lapsed Muslim like him would not be a misfit.

Jinnah's main fear, the fear which made him leave the Congress camp, was that the Gandhian movement would create a culture of politics in which, under the guise of Gandhian 'secularism', a Hindu culture would discomfit both the Indian secularist and the Indian Muslim. Being a westernised ethnic, Jinnah could not differentiate between a Hindu zealot and a spokesman of the peripheral Hindus. He had no clue as to why a zealot like D.V. Savarkar should be more hostile to Gandhi than to a modernist like Nehru.

However, if Jinnah had been alive, he would have been happy to see that his political style, even though in crisis because it has been taken over by the zealots in his 'homeland', survives in other parts of the subcontinent. In India often fully secular, even anti-religious, Muslim politicians get access to power in the name of their Muslim origins which they themselves see in purely instrumental terms. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, the Zulfikar Ali Bhuttos and the Zia-ur-Rahmans, who are non-believers or weak believers themselves, have constantly tried politically to encash the appeal of Islam.

The experience of Islam in this respect has been the experience of every religion of the subcontinent. It is the experience of being often reduced to the status of a handmaiden of politics, subservient to the needs of a nation-State and the class interests of the zealot and the westernised secularist, both of whom hold the vast majority of the people of their own religion in contempt; one for their lack of zealotry; the other for their incomplete westernisation.

In sum, formal, western-style secularisation has shown an incapacity to keep pace with politicisation in this part of the world, and it shows no sign of being able to do so in the future. As with countries long held up as models for India for their

developmental performance (at different times Britain, the United States, Soviet Russia, Maoist China and even Shah's Iran), in this sub-continent, too, ethnicity is refusing oblige and sing its swan song. Yet, as I have already said, the survival of ethnicity has not strengthened ethnicity or religious traditions; it has only allowed the pathologies of the latter to find political expression.

We thus come to the 'method' of a small minority of those working for religious or ethnic tolerance in India, though the method paradoxically is based on the faith and the culture of the majority of Indians. The method is implied in the unofficial Indian use of the word 'secularism'; it is explicit in the Gandhian and proto-Gandhian theories of inter-religious harmony.

Those loyal to the modern idea of the nation-State accept the idiom of secularism, and try to hitch ethnicity to politics in a more or less pragmatic way. They try to create a social basis for secularism by linking it to the reward system of the State, thus creating a vested interest in at least the secular political style. Those sympathetic to the Gandhian vision — to the utter embarrassment of the modern Indian State with its new-found global power ambitions and its fear of the growing political self-affirmation of the non-modern Indians — try to shift the emphasis from actors to texts, and from outer to inner incentives, so as to reaffirm 'true' religion and 'true' culture which they see as definitionally tolerant of the other religions and cultures.

Such a vision has many features. The most crucial of them is the recognition that the clash between modernity and religious traditions in the third world elicits from each culture four political responses to ethnicity. The responses can be called half ideal-types, half mythic structures.

The first of the four, which does not really fit in with the other three, is the ethnic construction of the *western man* whose personality is viewed as the cause of the West's success and the non-West's failure. This western man is a shadow cate-

gory or a dummy. Not merely because he is often physically absent in the third-world but also because the way the non-West construes him is not how he sees himself. Nor even the way he has 'really' existed in history. However, the category is not unreal either; millions of human beings have lived by that image and millions have suffered because of the existence of that image.

Sometimes the western man is construed by a non-western culture as an 'other' — to criticise or correct the allegedly faulty personality types available in the culture. The shadowy western man then becomes a critique of the indigenous personality as well as a projection of the ego-ideal of some sections of the indigenous population. If the sections are powerful, they may even manage to set up this ego ideal as the ideal of the entire society. It then begins to represent a new eupsychia (to use Abraham Maslow's concept of an utopian concept of personality) in opposition to the traditional eupsychias surviving in the society.

Along with this image of the western-man-as-the-ideal political-man goes a managerial attitude to ethnic and religious groupings, often expressed in the belief that successful nation-building involves hard decisions relating to ethnic minorities, decisions not based on the chauvinism of the majority, but on inspired, hard-headed statecraft.

What is in store for the minorities in the model is not very different from what is generally in store for them in a theocratic State. Only, instead of facing the prospect of being Islamised under, say, an Islamic theocracy, the minorities face the prospect of being westernised in a western nation-State. However, in the second case, the situation is morally 'redeemed' by the fact that what is in store for the ethnic minorities in the long run is no different from what is in store for the ethnic majority in the long run. Both become objects of social engineering and both face cultural extinction.

The second category of response is that of the *westernised native*, the ethnic who has internalised and ap-

proximated the western man (though his syncretism may include sometimes a touch of defiance, too). From a Rammohun Roy (1772-1833) who took a Brahmin cook with him to England after life-long defiance of Hindu caste codes, to a Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964) who in his weaker moments gave in to astrologers and tantriks of all hues, a long and colourful list of individuals provide clues to the inner contradictions of the westernised native. But it also happens to be a list of men who have fought for the western secular ideals in this part of the world and turned against their own cultural self, partly to identify with their western tormentors.

Corresponding to the personality type is a reconstructed history which locates in the past persons who reportedly represented the same ideals. Thus, modern India has rediscovered Ashoka from the third century BC and Akbar from the sixteenth-century as proper 'secular' rulers and it has reinterpreted traditional texts (such as the once dealing with the different *dharma*s of the king and the brahman, or the ones dealing with the morality of statecraft) to legitimise the western ideals of secular statecraft.

The westernised native may differ politically from the western man, he may even be the western man's political antagonist, but his ultimate aim is to westernise — he prefers to say 'modernise' or 'universalise' — his own culture. He takes the ideal of one world seriously and he believes in a theory of progress in which progress stands for uniformisation according to the model of the European nineteenth century visions of a desirable society. He believes that the western nations — or, if the westernised native happens to be orthodox socialist or positivist Marxist, the socialist West — are more advanced culturally; that the peripheries of the world will slowly and painfully have to traverse the same path of progress.

The two main obstacles to this he sees as the backward, religious masses, unexposed to modern scientific rationality, and their false leadership, ever willing to take

advantage of irrational, superstitious faiths. To fight the two obstacles he invokes the image of the western man and constantly compares it with the realities of the non-western cultures.

Thirdly, there is the *zealot* — the aggressive Hindu, Muslim or Sikh who, reacting to and yet internalising the humiliation inflicted on all faiths by a triumphant anti faith called western modernity, has accepted the modern attitude to all faiths including his own. He is the one the westernised native fears the most as the fanatic who might mobilise the otherwise-unmobilisable masses suffering from an acute case of false consciousness (even though such zealots mostly operate from urban bases and appeal to the semi-modern). If such a zealot is a Muslim or a Sikh we call him a fundamentalist, if he is a Hindu we call him a revivalist or a Hindu nationalist.

Strangely enough, the zealot only uses the traditional religious or ethnic boundaries as units of mobilisation, means of coalition building and settling scores. To him the faith of the ordinary Hindu, Muslim or Sikh is an embarrassment. The latter does not seem to show the right kind of respect to the purity of his own faith; he has no sense of unity; his commitment to *realpolitik* is partial; and he lacks the martial spirit shown by the zealot himself.

In this respect, the Hindu revivalist or Muslim fundamentalist is often only a variation on the secular political man of post-Enlightenment Europe and his ethnicity is skin-deep and reactive. He, too, has identified with the aggressors; he, too, has turned against his cultural self. Ultimately, the zealot's is more a political than a civilisational self-affirmation. To the zealot the idea of his own religion or culture is appealing, not the actuality of it. (That is why his strong commitment to the classical version of his religion and culture.)

He is one who has internalised the 'defeat' of his religion or culture in the hands of the modern world and he is the one who believes that that defeat can be avenged only when the peripheral faiths or ethnic

The Referent

The modern secular-rationalist

The semi-modern zealot

The nonmodern ethnic

Westernised Hindu

Hindu revivalist

Peripheral or everyday Hindu

The Western Man (dummy variable)

Westernised Muslim

Muslim fundamentalist

Peripheral or everyday Muslim

cities have internalised the technology of victory of the western man and decided to fight under the flag of their own faiths. The zealot hates the westernised ethnic as one who has sold himself to the western man but his hatred for the peripheral ethnic is deeper. For he shares with the westernised ethnic the reference point called the western-man.

Finally, there are the numerically preponderant *peripheral believers* (who are peripheral only because the zealots and the secularists have declared them so). These believers who have learnt to fight with, as also to survive, the zealots of the other faiths as well as their own. The modern secularist and the crypto-modern zealot know of the battles for survival against the zealots of other faiths, not of the other battle against the zealots of one's own. Neither the secularist nor the zealot has the sensitivity to stand witness to this other battle for survival. Neither has the time to remember the experience of neighbourliness and co-survival which characterises the relationships among the peripheral believers of different faiths.

The non-modern, peripheral ethnic has a longer and deeper memory. And it is to him and his ideology that Gandhi turned to give a political basis to his concept of religious and ethnic tolerance. A number of scholars, most recently T.K. Mahadevan and Agehananda Bharati, have written about Gandhi's poor knowledge of textual Hinduism. An impartial scholar of classical Hinduism cannot but agree with them. Surely Gandhi had little patience with the greater Sanskritic culture. He sometimes paid lip service to it but there could be little doubt that his primary allegiance was to the folk theologies of Hinduism and Islam.

His family belonged to the Pranami sect, a sect deeply influenced by Islam and he belonged to a region where Muslim communities were in turn deeply influenced by Hindu folk theology. He had reason to be confident that religions not merely divided but also united human aggregates.

Once you have classified the ethnic personality in politics (see summary in chart), it becomes obvious that in societies like India, there are two affinities and three enmities in any situation involving two religious communities. The overt affinity is between the westernised believers of the two communities. The westernised Hindu and the westernised Muslim, for instance, can spend days discussing their commonness, especially how the two of them are different from the common run of Hindus and Muslims who are willing to kill each other for the sake of their faiths, and how in the distant future, they, the barbarians, might be persuaded to shed their faith, modernise and then live happily ever after. The covert affinity is between the peripheral Hindus and peripheral Muslims, much less accessible to the modern Indian and to modern scholarship.

The overt hostility is that between the Hindu and the Muslim zealots who hate each other but understand each other's motivations perfectly. The less overt one is the hostility of the westernised ethnic towards the peripherals of his own as well as other faiths whom the westernised ethnic sees as passive or prospective zealots. The covert hostility is that of the zealot whose hatred for the everyday practitioner of his own faith is total.

I have more or less completed my analysis. All that remains to be done

is briefly to mention some features of the peripheral majority, their folk religions and folk theologies, and the politics of tolerance implicit in them. This tolerance bypasses the three enmities mentioned above and has the capacity to survive and even enrich the process of democratic participation, unlike the tolerance of the modernised sector which proves fragile in a situation of expanding participation.

First, the peripheral believers in a traditional society face a world-view which seeks to pre-empt and frequently deny the existence of their traditional ideology of tolerance. Thus, modern India talks of Ashoka and Akbar without admitting that they did not build a tolerant State in the sense in which a Lenin or a Jawaharlal Nehru would have wanted them to; they built their tolerance on the tenets of Buddhism and Islam.

Likewise, the chieftains of the Hindu zealots like to refer to the profound truth that India is tolerant because it is Hindu. But their claim has a dishonest ring about it, for they violently disagree when someone parodies them and says that Akbar was tolerant because he was Muslim or Ashoka was great because he was a Buddhist first and a king second.

All Gandhi did as a *sanatani* or traditional Hindu was to take both these positions seriously — the one which says that India is secular because it is Hindu and the one which says Akbar was tolerant because he was a Muslim — and to openly admit the religious basis of ethnic tolerance in India. He did the same thing with Christianity and tried to do so haphazardly with Sikhism and Judaism, too.

Instead of committing himself to the hopeless task of banishing religion from politics while expanding democratic participation, he dared seek a politics which would be infused with the right kind of religion and be tolerant. That is why a Hindu zealot found him a serious opposition and killed him. As I have already said, Hindu zealotry has never found the modernist a serious enemy; it has found in him only an effete, self-hating Hindu.

Secondly, Gandhi recognised that India's most effective preachers of inter-communal harmony in the past have mostly been either pre-modern, non-modern or anti-modern. Men like Nehru, he felt, were only a partial or apparent exception to this rule. Sensing the critique of modernity implied in this recognition, the embarrassed modernists have tried to integrate Gandhi in their framework by conceptualising Hinduism and Islam as two cultures which could be freed from their religious moorings and fitted into a composite whole called the Indian culture to which all right-thinking Indians should be allegiant.

Unfortunately, religions are not machine-parts and politicians and scholars make bad cultural machinists. The best of Hinduism and the best of Islam may go together as the titles of two paperback books of readings in the same series, but will hardly invoke two living religious traditions trying to cope with each other or with real-life issues.

Those outside the modern sector in India sense this: They are conscious of the existence of two religions called Hinduism and Islam as well as of the Hindu construction of Islam and the Muslim construction of Hinduism. It is on the basis of such constructions — and by this I certainly mean something more than stereotypes — that they operate in everyday life. At this plane the 'languages' of Hinduism and Islam — and for that matter all major religions and ethnic traditions in India — have now interlocking and/or common grammars. These grammars survive, in spite of the efforts of learned scholars to read them as folk theologies — as inferior, peripheral versions of Hinduism and Islam. They survive as a mode of mutuality and a major source of Indian creativity.

Creativity, after all, presumes a certain marginality and, in the matter of culture, a certain dialectic between the classical and the folk. It has to transcend the classicist — and elite — formulation that classi-

cism is the centre of the culture, to protect the classicism itself from becoming a two-dimensional frozen instance of a culture museumised and commoditified.

Let us consider for a moment what many consider to be the finest expression of Indian creativity: north Indian classical music. Is it Hindu? Is it Muslim? Is it secular? One need not to do a very imaginative empirical work on Indian creative musicians — though some such works are available — to pierce through their derived sloganeering about secularism and to find out that the Muslim musicians think north Indian classical music to be mainly Muslim, the Hindu musicians think it to be mainly Hindu.

This could be read as a source of possible conflict; it could be read as the possible source of the cultural power of such music. One of the major symbols of the north Indian classical tradition in this century, Allauddin Khan, when he wanted to honour his wife Madina Begum by composing a new *raga* in her name, could not apparently find anything less Vaishnava than *madanmanjari*.

Modern secularism fails to see the religious sources of such creativity and tolerance of other faiths. It sees the refusal of Bade Ghulam Ali to sing paeans to Pakistan or to its founder during his brief stay in that country as an expression of his secularism. Traditional theories of ethnic tolerance see it as an expression of *his* Islam or of a truer Islam. They recognise that song texts in north Indian classical music have a tradition behind them and they bear a direct relationship with an artist's or a *gharana's* mode of creativity. That tradition has a direct religious meaning — simultaneously Hindu and Islamic. It cannot be artificially given a religious meaning exclusively identified with one faith. Nor can it be ever fully secularised.

Similarly with architecture. P.N. Oak has worked for years on a 'Hindu' history of the Taj Mahal. Now carbon dating seems to be lending partial support to this theory. Trying pathetically to be a

proper modern historian, Oak never owns up the psychological insight he is tacitly articulating: the Taj Mahal does seem sanctified to a religious Hindu, and deeply Islamic to the believing Muslim. There lies the Indian meaning of its grandeur as well as appeal. Disconnect Taj from either of the two traditions, and it becomes a monument purely for the non-Indian tourists and orientalis. Oak's history, thus, is not only irrelevant to the majority of Hindus; it is anti-Hindu.

What is true of the zealot's approach to culture is also true of the westernised native's attitude to culture. The modern secularist and the modern Hindu try to preserve the Taj as a monument for tourists and build an oil refinery next to it. Their modernity is linked to the Taj through the market and through sulphuric acid. The traditional concept of ethnic tolerance, concerned, powerless and at bay, can only pray at the mosque hoping that the modern world will pass it by.

Both examples provide clues to an alternative awareness of the culture of India. This awareness admits that at one plane Hinduism has become a part of Indian Islam and Islam a part of Hinduism — that the ordinary Indian Muslim knows — even if being part of a minority he finds it more difficult to admit — that Indian Islam, one of the most creative in the world, owes its creativity to its encounter with the other faith of India, exactly the way the everyday Hindu knows that the creativity of Hinduism has been sharpened over the centuries by its encounters with other faiths, mainly Islam, Buddhism, Christianity and Sikhism.

True that the uprooted or marginalised Muslim, urbanised and frequently lumpenised, often looks to the Middle East for salvation. And so does sometimes the Mullah trying desperately to protect his place among followers whose peripheral Islam does not often grant him the centrality he seeks. But can one not make a strong case that such defensiveness follows not so much from his faith as from his

frustration and insecurity in his immediate political environs?

The Gandhian response to this question is clear. If the rules governing the treatment of *mlechchhas* and *vidharmis* in Manu, Yajnavalkya and Kautilya do not handicap the Hindu in a democratic order, because he has other *shastras* and traditions to fall back upon, the concept of *dar'ul Islam* also should not make the Muslim a congenital misfit in a plural society. There are alternative traditions in Islam, too.

I find in the *Indian Express* of January 29, 1983, a brief biographical note written by a journalist which, in an abbreviated form and with minor editing, I want to reproduce for the scholarly secularist as my last word on the inner capacities of faiths in the matter of ethnic tolerance.

On January 9, the house of a young Telugu poet in the old city of Hyderabad was raided by a band of communalists. They stabbed him, his wife and his child. The woman died immediately, the poet on the way to the hospital. The orphaned boy is in hospital; dangling between life and death. Communal frenzy does not know what it claims. They...did not know that they were destroying a promising Telugu poet, who was writing the 17th version of *Ramayana*.

...the poet was born on January 2, 1946 at Kalwakurty, a big tehsil village in Mahboobnagar district of the Telengana region. His mother was a teacher in the village school. He too followed in her footsteps. 'Teaching is the noblest profession', he used to say. But he was not content being a matric-passed trained basic teacher. His ambition was to become a *vidwaan* of Samskrit. But Kashi Vidyapeeth rejected him. Then he met a scholar, Pandit Gunday Rao Harkarey, who taught him the secret of learning a language by the self-taught method... Thus, studying privately, he obtained Master's degrees in three languages — Samskrit, Telugu and Hindi.

He had started composing small poems in Telugu when he was just 12 years old. After his marriage, he produced four volumes of *kaavyas* and three volumes of *khanda kaavyas*. After the publication of 'Vijaya Bheri', 'Asru Dharu' and 'Bharati', he was hailed as the most significant poet since Umar Ali Shah. Presenting him at a Telugu mushaira, Viswanatha Satyanarayana.. said 'This is a gathering of poets in their 70s. This young poet being only 25 should not have been here. But if he is here, it is because he already was 50 when he was born'. Such a rich tribute...is all the more significant because the poet was from Telengana and the literary elite of the Godawari district dismiss Telengana's 'ulligaddi, badnikai' Telugu with disdain... the unspoilt villager in the poet had survived despite the many degrees he obtained. ...

The young poet now began studying all the versions of *Ramayana* — Valmiki, Ranganatha, Bhaskara, Kambha, Molla, Viswanatha, Kalpa Vruksha and Tulsi. 'I have discovered rational and logical flaws in Valmiki in his description of places and situation', he said, 'I want to write my version of *Ramayana*. ...I want to name it "Yaseen Ramayana". If will be my gift to posterity'. That is what Ghulaam Yaseen, the teacher and the poet, was busy doing when fanaticism struck its deathly blow. ...And the *Ramayana* which Ghulaam Yaseen wanted to leave behind him...remains unfinished.

What was Ghulaam Yaseen? A secular Muslim who did not know his real vocation? A good man with a Muslim name who could be used by dedicated social reformers or by the Indian State to establish bridges between faiths? A crypto-Hindu killed by the Hindus by mistake? Or a true Muslim who could express his religious sensitivities through other people's faiths? Or an Indian whose assassination has simultaneously impoverished Hinduism, Islam and Indianness?

Gandhi's response to these questions, I am sure, would have been unambiguous. What about ours?

III.

Only one thing remains to be discussed now. And the case of poet Ghulaam Yaseen brings us back to it with a vengeance: riots.

From the growing volume of data on religious violence in India it is now fairly obvious that riots have only indirect links with traditions or faith. Though the modern Indian loves to see all riots as products of insufficient modernisation, a very large majority of all riots takes place in urban and semi-urban India where only one-fifth of Indians live. Within urban India in turn, riots co-vary significantly with industrialisation, uprooting, breakdown of traditional social ties and habitats.

Likewise, the frequency of riots go down as we go back into recorded history. Even if one accepts the favourite argument of Indian modernists that all positive interpretations of the Indian past are imperfect history, it is difficult to believe that earlier centuries could match the going rate of more than one riot a day in India. Nor can the modernists adequately explain the five-fold increase in the number of riots in the last three decades.

One is almost forced to admit that communal riots in India have a modern connection. This connection is not surprising. While religious violence was certainly not unknown in pre-modern or non-modern India, the kind of 'rational', 'managerial', intercommunal violence we often witness nowadays can only be a byproduct of secularisation and modernisation. Only a secular, scientific concept of another human aggregate or individual — only total objectification — can sanction the cold-bloodedness and organisation which have come to characterise many of the riots in recent times.

True, there has always been an element of organisation in riots. Religious violence is rarely, if ever,

a spontaneous expression of faith or of the desire for martyrdom. True, during this century, this element of organisation has generally been provided by the zealots and by the political formations controlled by the zealots. This is but natural. Only the semi-modern zealots, trying to organise their cobelievers as a political community — as an instrument of heroic, death-denying transcendence — can have the motivation and the ideology to provide the organisational base for riots.

For that very reason, however, there is a built-in check in the situation. Take for instance the self-conscious Hindu zealot who, embarrassed by his own un-Hindu zealotry, always defensively asserts that Hinduism is more tolerant than other faiths, while admiring, deeper down, the 'intolerance' of the other faiths. He also recognises that this tolerant spirit of Hinduism is based on the unorganised, polycentric nature of the faith. The Hindu who is tolerant is not a zealot; he does not even talk of his tolerance. The zealot who talks of Hindu tolerance is not tolerant, for he is not the Hindu who is tolerant.

This poses a dilemma for the zealot. On the one hand he hates the run-of-the-mill Hindus for what they are; on the other, the more he demonstrates his zealotry, the more isolated he gets from the common run of Hindus. (The modernists who seek the sources of zealotry in the everyday Hindu forget that the most ardent champions of Hinduism have enjoyed the electoral support of a very small proportion of the Hindus, that too in semi-modern, urban India). In other words, the zealot's success is self-limiting, even though it can be fearsome in the short run.

No such limit works when the westernised Hindu uses religion in politics. The zealot as a semi-westernised, marginal Hindu can only look wistfully at the fully westernised, modern Hindu and his command of modern statecraft, organisations and mass media. The zealot has to look even more wistfully at the support the peripheral Hindu has given till now to his

westernised brothers and denied the zealot, even though the zealot claims to fight for the Hindu cause and the westernised Hindu does not. As if the peripherals knew that the westernised Hindu was engaged in the hopeless task of abolishing Hinduism, whereas the zealot was engaged in the more attainable and therefore dangerous task of altering the content of Hinduism.

It is the westernised Hindu's command over modern statecraft, combined with his efforts to protect his earlier hegemony in competitive mass politics, and his desecralised secularism which has created a volatile situation in the country today. The modern, secular, westernised Hindu, like his counterparts among the Sinhalese Buddhists in Sri Lanka and the Punjabi Muslims in Pakistan, is now constantly pushed towards the political use of religion.

He is pushed because he has two natural assets: (1) better access to the mass media, as compared to that of the zealot and the peripheral Hindu, and (2) greater ability to use dispassionately the passions of faith of the zealot and the peripheral Hindu. Both assets give him advantages which are not available either to the zealot or to the peripheral believer.

In other words, when the secular modernists get involved in the game of organised religious or ethnic violence to fight off political defeat, they play the game not as fanatics trying to advance the cause of their own community or faith but as politicians who must take advantage of human passions to mobilise the political, especially electoral, support of the numerically preponderant 'passive' believers. And as the role of modern communication and modern organisations expand in politics, the temptation as well as capacity of the secular modernists to organise religious or ethnic violence in a fully secular and scientific manner increases.

It is the unfolding of this process which we are witnessing in India today. In earlier riots, organisation by the zealot and political cost-calculation by everyone used to play an important but small role. A

larger role was played by religious fanaticism, stereotypes and prejudices. Over the years the role of organisation and rational cost-calculations have expanded enormously. During the 1980s, in Bhiwandi, Delhi and Ahmedabad we have seen fully planned and expertly executed pogroms run by hired psychopaths and lumpen proletariat who not only start and sustain mob violence but do so without much of fanaticism, stereotyping and prejudice.

It will not be an exaggeration to say that this new breed of riots depends more on rationality, objectivity and self-interest — on hard materialism, cost-benefit analysis and greed — than on religious fanaticism or stereotypes. Fanaticism and stereotyping come in, but in a diluted form, to provide the morally troubled middle-classes with post facto rationalisation of what the local toughs, the political machines, and the lumpen mobs do.

In matters of riot, rationality is now used to generate violence — to rob, to burn, to kill — while the passions are used to sustain the idea of a moral world where the robbery, the arson and the murder are not arbitrary acts of God but are deserved punishments for the acts of some members of the victims' community. In this sense, we are now witnesses to primarily secular riots, justified later on in non-secular terms for the benefit of the victims and the instruments of violence.

No other riot of recent times illustrates this point better than the carnage of Sikhs in Delhi in November 1984. (I shall try not to glorify the event by calling it a riot, for it was clearly a one-way affair. However, such organised, religious 'wars' can include arrangements with politicians of other faiths to give the violence the look of a riot, as in Hyderabad in 1984).

First a contextual fact. The Sikhs had been traditionally seen by the Hindus as well as by the Sikhs themselves not as an alien community but as part of the Hindu social order. After all, the principle of endogamy was never observed in the case of Hindu-Sikh relations and the

traditional social ties which bound the two communities were deep. That is, by conventional criteria, the Sikhs were not a minority nor did they see themselves as such. It took a long period of political skull-dugery and the experience of the 1984 riots to turn them into a distinct minority.

Because of this background, Hindu or Sikh zealotry, too, has never found it possible, till recently, to arouse in Hindu-Sikh conflicts the fanaticism which has been associated with the Hindu-Muslim conflicts in this century. It was not that easy during the days of violence in November to induce the Hindu neighbours to take part in the pogrom against the Sikhs. At best they could be turned into passive observers who later on, if guilty about their passivity, could be given ready-made packaged 'reasons' through the government-controlled media as to why the Sikhs needed to learn a lesson.

Thus, except for a few localities, the Hindu neighbours tried to help Sikh families to escape the killers, sometimes at great risk to their own security. Communities with a shared past did even better. For instance, many erstwhile refugee colonies, set up in the late forties by the victims of the partition riots, formed joint Hindu-Sikh defence committees and protected their Sikh members successfully. The exceptions were localities where there were no neighbourly ties either because the communities were new settlements or because they were dominated by pseudo-communities of uprooted, economically-deprived isolates and criminals.

Second, organisations like the RSS, which generally take a lead in organising violence against minorities, also got into the act this time. However, according to the Sikhs themselves, these zealots acted as small-time activists, not as the kingpins of the pogrom. In a majority of cases, the attackers came from outside the community, in organised groups and in busloads. Often they came from the nearby State of Haryana. As if they were being unloaded against the poorer, less defended Sikh communities, the

extermination of which outside the psychological boundaries of middle-class city life would not disturb the conscience of the average middle-class citizen.

The organisers knew that many middle-class Hindus would find it easier retrospectively to justify the pogrom if the major killings did not take place before their own eyes or before the eyes of their families, and if the killings did not indicate a total breakdown of the moral order. Attacks against those living at the geographical and psychological peripheries of Delhi's civic life ensured such a 'numbing' of the citizens' moral self.

The attackers on their part were motivated not so much by any anger or sorrow on the assassination of Indira Gandhi, usually given as the reason for the carnage, but mainly by the prospect of loot. In many cases, they joked and laughed when participating in the arson, rape and the killings. From the available accounts of the victims, even the police, the docile bureaucrats and the Congress-I activists who took part in the pogrom did so not as a spontaneous revenge for Mrs Gandhi's assassination but as a part of a well-oiled machine.

This is best evidenced by the way in which the police got rid of all evidences of the carnage in an organised, calculated fashion. The other clue is the way rumours were deliberately spread in the city (such as the one about the city's drinking water being poisoned by the Sikhs) to provoke the citizenry, to further numb its moral sense, and to buy its passivity.

Third, before, during and after the pogrom, a propaganda barrage against the Sikhs was kept up by the monopoly media, represented by the radio, the television and the servitor press. This propaganda dubbed as seditious even things which previously had looked innocuous or minor such as the alleged anti-national demands of the Anandpur Sahib Resolution.

The Resolution had been passed twelve years ago in the presence of

Congress-I stalwarts; it was later on blessed by persons like Jayaprakash Narayan, and considered harmless enough by Mrs Gandhi for her to have supported and financed Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale even after he had become a strong votary of the Resolution. Evidently, aware that the minorities were gradually abandoning the Congress-I, the ruling party was keen to win over a sizeable chunk of the Hindu vote, even at the cost of unleashing a Hindu backlash and making a target out of the Sikhs.

At this plane, the Sikhs were substitutable victims, as were the Muslims in Hyderabad in September 1984 and the Muslims and the Dalits in Ahmedabad in April-May 1985. Only the organisers of such pogroms are not substitutable; they have to belong to the sector from which the Indian elites come; they have to take advantage of the State-controlled media and the State's law-and-order machinery.

It is not easy to organise a pogrom against a community not often seen as a minority. Despite efforts by Sikh zealots and despite the Sikhs being a crushing majority in the Punjab countryside, it was not possible to organise a single riot against the Hindus there during 1982-84. The Sikh zealots had to depend on a small band of assassins and they too ended up by killing more Sikhs than Hindus.

Likewise, it was not easy to induce the ordinary Hindu to attack the Sikhs in Delhi; in most cases one had to use imported gangs or the criminal underworld of Delhi, provide them with transport and weapons, and motivate them with the promise of loot, rape and protection. I like to believe that at one time, perhaps fifty or one hundred years ago, it must have been as difficult to organise a Hindu-Muslim riot. It is not easy to make a fanatic out of the ordinary believer, be he a Hindu, Muslim or Sikh.

Finally, while in all riots it is the poor who suffer the most, in 'secular riots' their lot becomes worse. Fana-

rel about playing music before a mosque, smoking before a gurdwara or by cow slaughter touches more different classes than does a riot which is fully organised.

In the latter case, the demand for secrecy, the fear of public protest, and the need to protect the rioting cadres from the hands of the law, and the need to destroy evidence of party or State involvement in the riots, force the organisers to choose dispensable victims who are less visible and have lesser access to the law courts and the media. Only the poor can meet these criteria.

In the Delhi carnage, available data suggest that less than two per cent of the Sikhs killed were well-to-do. The rest were poor or very poor. These poor Sikhs were mostly Congress-I supporters and in most cases they did not even speak Punjabi. A majority of them were Rajasthani Sikhs and they were hostile to the political demands of the Punjabi Sikhs. All this did not save them. Their poverty and their marginality doomed them. Secular communal violence, one suspects, is always more decisively anti-poor than the non-secular on.

To sum up, the Delhi carnage suggests that religious violence is becoming increasingly a product of hard political cost-calculations, level-headed organisation, and dispassionate arousal of communal feelings. It is now primarily a product of faulty rationality, not of faulty passions. The idea of secularism may be able to cope with religious riots which grow out of faulty passions but it is unable to cope with the riots which grow out of dispassionate, scientifically managed violence.

Given the contours of the existing ideology of secularism, instead of resisting such violence, secularism endorses the worldview from within which such violence flows. In practical terms, too, many secularists, when faced with State-sponsored communal violence, begin to collaborate with the sponsors because they see such collaboration as profitable. They can then justify the collaboration in terms of ornate

theories which have little to do with immediate realities.

Recognising this new role of secularism is also to recognise that the major threats to religious tolerance now come from the modern sector in India. That is why the secularists have no answer when the minorities are attacked—or a base is laid for an attack on them—with reference to modern, secular criteria, when for example the Sikhs as a community are attacked for their links with external powers or for anti-national ideology, the Muslims for multiplying like bedbugs or the South Indians for not speaking Hindi.

Likewise, the Delhi carnage has made it clear that little help can be expected from the secularists when the State gets involved in organising communal violence. A few naive, good-hearted secularists may break ranks, but the remainder goose-step for whoever controls the State and the media and redefine cultural distinctiveness as antithetical to the interests of the State and, thus, as culpable.

Probably the thrust of the last part of the argument is that we can no longer define any sector, class or ideology as intrinsically incapable of producing communal violence. Each grouping or subculture has its own potential pathology which becomes patent once the group or the subculture establishes its hegemony in the society. It follows that neither a mechanical reiteration of the principle of secularism nor its mechanical exclusion from public life or public documents (such as the Constitution) will ensure religious tolerance in India.

To build a more tolerant society we shall have to defy the imperialism of categories of our times which allows the concept of secularism (which is but one out of many ways of moving towards a more tolerant society and a not very successful one at that) to hegemonise the idea of tolerance, so that any one who is not secular becomes definitionally intolerant. The defiance must involve attempts to recover the first-hand experience of religious and ethnic conflicts and cooperation from the ready-made interpretations of them given by the secularists.

Punjab and communalism

M. S. DHAMI

ONE sobering thought that recurs to a close observer of recent Hindu-Sikh communal tension in Punjab is the painful realisation of how ineffective has been the role of liberal, secularist and left-oriented forces — despite their commendable effort — in stemming the tide of communalism. It may not be an exaggeration to say that at critical times these forces have proved to be 'socially marginal'.¹ Our purpose in highlighting this obvious reality is to underline the need for an adequate explanation of the communal problem in the State.

The primary focus of this study is

* This is the revised version of the article which appeared in the *Punjab Journal of Politics*, Vol. ix, No. 1 (January-June 1985).

1. The phrase is taken from Satish Saberwal, 'Societal Design in History: The West and India,' Occasional Paper Number 1, Nehru Memorial Museum Library, New Delhi, n.d., p. 8.

to explore some of the basic determinants of Hindu Sikh communalism. In the concluding section, we provide a tentative explanation of the recent escalation of communal tension,² along with some impressionistic observations on the recent effort to revive the political process in the State. In this era of rapid social change, communalism and communal conflicts are sustained by changes in the socio-economic structure, more often involving economic insecurities and social anxieties to individuals due to the dislocating effects of change.

In such situations, communal and group solidarities provide emotional

2. For distinction between 'communalism' and 'communal tension', see Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1984), pp. 4-5; W.C. Smith, *Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis* (New Delhi: Usha Publications, 1979, Indian reprint of 1946 edition), pp. 211-12.

anchorage and personal identifications. In the modern Punjabi society, the cultural realm, based upon the reinterpreted cultural heritage of the competing religious communities, has provided a fertile ground for the growth of communal solidarities. In addition, competition among ethnic groups³ in the political arena for power, status and tangible economic benefits—at a time when the political institutions are showing signs of increasing strain⁴—acts as an important contributory factor. For analytical purposes we are treating political process as a separate category.

For the purpose of this study, we shall club the various studies on the subject under three overall perspectives. Firstly, the recent works of Bipan Chandra, P.C. Joshi and Asghar Ali Engineer⁵ which we characterise as the left-oriented perspective.⁶ The second perspective includes the studies of Louis Dumont, Satish Saberwal, Francis Robinson and Ratna Naidu.⁷

3. For our purposes we shall be using communal and ethnic groups interchangeably—the former term has pejorative connotation.

4. It is believed by a number of social scientists that recent years have witnessed a perceptible erosion of political institutions in India.

5. Bipan Chandra, n. 2; P.C. Joshi, 'Economic Background of Communalism in India—A Model of Analysis,' in B.R. Nanda, ed., *Essays in Modern Indian History* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1980) pp. 167-180; Asghar Ali Engineer, 'A Theory of Communal Riots,' *Seminar*, 291 (November 1983); A.A. Engineer, 'Theory of Communal Riots: Subtler Aspects,' *Mainstream*, 22, no. 38 (19 May 1984), 15-21.

6. From this it should not be construed that the other two approaches are rightist or centrist. The criteria on which any approach is to be judged is its explanatory power as well as its sensitivity to certain cherished human values.

7. Louis Dumont, 'Nationalism and Communalism,' in *Religion/Politics and History in India: Collected Papers in Indian Sociology* (Paris/Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1970) 89-110; Satish Saberwal, 'Elements of Communalism, I and II,' *Mainstream*, Nos. 29 and 30, 21 and 28 March 1981; Francis Robinson, *Separatism Among Indian Muslims: The Politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923* (Delhi: Vikas 1975); Ratna Naidu, *Communal Edge to Plural Societies: India and Malaysia* (Delhi: Vikas, 1980).

Dumont and Saberwal's approach may be characterised as cultural-historical. Naidu's work is more definitive and she explains communalism in terms of 'politico-economic and cultural' factors. Finally, we may mention a few important studies of Paul R. Brass and Joseph Rothschild, leading political scientists⁸ in the field, who treat the phenomenon of ethnic identities and ethnic conflict from a political perspective, assigning primacy to political determinants, that is, to political elites or 'political entrepreneurs', party organisations, in mobilising communal/ethnic consciousness among the competing groups.

Bipan Chandra traces the growth of communal ideology and politics to the social framework provided by the colonial economy and polity. Further, colonial underdevelopment and the crisis of the colonial economy resulted in widespread unemployment, which led to widespread scramble for jobs among the middle classes. This according to Chandra 'helped communalism acquire its real mass base.' Further, struggle between economic classes—when these happened to belong to different communities—assumed communal dimension. Chandra's panacea for these distortions is that the national struggle during the colonial period should have been in terms of economic classes and this would have kept the religious consciousness in check.⁹

For Chandra, the basic contradiction during the colonial period was between the Indian people and colonialism. And 'the Hindu-Muslim contradiction' had no basis in reality: further, it 'was not an efficient (or "real") causation of communalism.'¹⁰ Chandra favours a

8. Joseph Rothschild, *Ethnopolitics: A Conceptual Framework* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981); Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1974); Francis Robinson, 'Nation Formation: The Brass Thesis and Muslim Separatism,' *The Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 15, no. 3 (November 1977), 215-230.

9. Bipan Chandra, 'Communalism in Retrospect,' *Mainstream*, 12, no. 51 (18 August 1984) p. 18.

10. Bipan Chandra, n. 2, pp. 23-24.

two-pronged struggle to fight communalism: firstly, political-ideological education of the people for promoting secular consciousness, treating communal consciousness as 'false consciousness' or something engineered by the exploiting classes to subserve their own interests; second relates to changing the 'social reality' or, in other words a fundamental reordering of the social structure.¹¹

The two pronged struggle involves two basic assumptions: (i) that such ideological struggle would have taken root in the existing social structure; and (ii) stipulated changes in the social structure would have been ushered in. Firstly, given the social base of the national movement—and Chandra is fully aware of this fact—such political ideological struggle, if at all it got moving, would have made a marginal impact. As to the second assumption, the infrastructure for the fundamental social change did not exist. In this connection, Dumont's observation dealing with the post-Independence period deserves serious attention. Referring to change in the social structure, more especially in the caste system, Dumont writes that contemporary literature 'exaggerates' change. 'One thing is certain: society as an overall framework has not changed; there has been change in the society and not of the society.'¹²

One may mention that Dumont was certainly not talking of radical change. So, in view of the questionable nature of Chandra's assumptions, this panacea is far from convincing. This further underlines the fact that the task for the liberal secularist and leftist in India is stupendous, at least for quite some time to come. And the reality of community-based interests cannot be brushed aside in all cases, and these need to be treated with greater sensitivity and understanding. There may be

11. Bipan Chandra, n. 9, pp. 19-20.

12. Quoted in T.N. Madan, 'On the Nature of Caste in India: A Review Symposium on Louis Dumont's *Homo Hierarchicus*,' *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, N.S. vol 5 (December 1971), p. 7; see also, Milton Singer, 'Preface,' in Milton Singer and Bernard Cohn, eds., *Structure and Change in Indian Society* (Chicago: Aldine, 1968), p. 11.

cases where fears and anxieties of minority groups — and in certain cases of the majority have basis in reality and may not be far-fetched.

P.C. Joshi, while discussing the causes which led to Muslim separatism, utilizes the model of 'cumulative causation.' For the Indian Muslims, the British colonial impact led to a set-back in the economic and political sphere vis-a-vis the majority community. And this engendered in them the feeling of deprivation which ultimately prepared the ground for secessionist demands. Joshi, however, underplays pre-existing antipathies between the two communities.¹³ In recent years Asghar Ali Engineer has written extensively on communalism and communal riots. On the whole, he views the subject from the Marxist perspective. He, however, recognises the great mobilizatory potential of religion.¹⁴ Moreover, quite a number of his reports on communal riots are based on his personal field studies which provide much needed empirical content to his treatment.¹⁵

Louis Dumont's cultural-historical perspective provides useful insight into the Hindu-Muslim communal problem.¹⁶ The more or less peaceful coexistence of the two communities after the Muslim conquest, according to Dumont, did not produce any 'general ideological synthesis.' Lack of ideological synthesis created 'lasting social heterogeneity of the two communities'. British rule in the modern period led to the growth of revivalist movements among the two communities which further reaffirmed the traditional values. Subsequent growth of political parties too failed to transcend the traditional social structure and the associated value systems. So it is no wonder that in the matter of injecting religion into politics,

13. Joshi, n. 5, pp. 172-173.

14. Asghar Ali Engineer, 'Socio-Economic Basis of Communalism', *Punjab Journal of Politics*, 8, no. 1 (January-June 1984), 54; Engineer, n. 5, p. 19; W.C. Smith, n. 2, p. 211.

15. For instance, see Asghar Ali Engineer, 'From Nationalism to Communalism: Transformation of Malegaon', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18, no. 29 (16 July 1983).

16. Dumont, n. 7, pp. 95-110,

Dumont treats both the Congress and Muslim League as complementary to each other, that is, equally responsible for it.

Dumont's sociological view of the Congress provides a more balanced picture regarding its secular and national character. At the level of principle and in its overt activities, 'the Congress appears essentially as a purely national movement'. The question, however, arises at the level of sociological reality, whether the Congress 'did or did not mirror a tendency to identify the Indian nation with the dominant high caste Hindus.' After discussing this poser, Dumont concludes:

'It is true that Gandhi did not oppose a separate electorate for the Muslims. It can be granted that those Congressmen who did so the most effectively were not religious but liberal minded; and yet if we speak of the Congress as a whole, we have to blend diverse motivations and say that its refusal of such measures was tinged with communal motives, or might have appeared so to Muslims.'¹⁷

Dumont further argues that the failure of the Congress to forestall partition was due to the fact that its leaders disregarded the feeling of the Muslim being treated as socially distinct. And for a long intervening period the unity could have been built on the recognition of 'their very separateness.'¹⁸

Satish Saberwal in his perceptive analysis of communalism in India elaborates Dumont's views regarding the key role of ideas and traditions. Saberwal refers to the general reluctance among social scientists—with few exceptions—to take serious account of religious beliefs and institutions for understanding communalism. He does not belittle the role of material interests; but argues that even when these interests are involved, the religious symbols may come to the fore by virtue merely of their mobilizational potential.¹⁹

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 103, 104-105.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

19. Saberwal, n. 7, pp. 28-29.

Saberwal also establishes the linkage of religious ideas and symbols to the social structure. Regarding the genesis of Hindu-Muslim communalism he concludes:...'I am suggesting that the rise of communalism during the colonial period should perhaps be seen in relation to the longstanding separativeness of the religious network, the acute social distance expressing a high level of social antagonism between Muslims and Hindus...and the growth of communally homogeneous neighbourhoods in the metropolitan centres.'²⁰

Ratna Naidu, being more sensitive to the sociological reality of Indian society prefers 'enlightened secularism' to straight-jacket secularism.²¹ On the basis of her study of communal conflict in two Asian countries, India and Malaysia, she argues: 'Where communal groups have distinct economic interests, political choices are also communally based. Most ethno-cultural groups in the ex-colonies of Asia and Africa do have competing economic and political interests, both because historically they were suctioned into the modernizing net not as individuals but as ethno-cultural groups, and because they compete in strictly zero-sum game situations.'

In comparing differing attitudes towards the communal problem in Malaysia and India, she points out that Indian leadership has always refused to concede the reality of communal interests. The Malaysian leadership, on the other hand, openly recognises community-based political interests, and recognition is considered halfway to its solution.²² This, however, should not be taken to mean that there are not considerable areas where common interests are there — or could be fostered through suitable 'socializing' practices.²³ And even in those areas

20. Saberwal, n. 7, p. 18.

21. Ratna Naidu, n. 7, 139. The phrase, 'enlightened secularism' is adapted from the one used by M.R.A. Baig in *Muslim Dilemma in India* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1974), pp. 151-155.

22. Ratna Naidu, n. 7, Chap. 3.

23. In the recent communal tension in Punjab, the leftist cadres of Communist

where real interests differ, these can be sorted out through suitable institutional devices. Perhaps the problem of national minorities which happen to be concentrated in one region can be tackled within the Indian federal set up. Despite this qualification, it must be realised that so long as there is no fundamental change in values of the competing ethnic groups, accompanied by corresponding changes in the social structure, we have to give recognition to the reality highlighted by Ratna Naidu.

Our analysis of the Hindu-Sikh communal problem assumes that, at least for quite some time, we have to live with the prevailing social structure and the associated value systems. We begin with the socio-historical context which led to the development of communal identities; the traditional and modern social and religious network which sustain these identities; the social background of the political and 'cultural' elites²⁴ who have laid the ideological foundations of these identities.

How religious and political ideals are formulated depends upon the socio-historical context and the interests of the social groups or classes. The two sets of elites represent.²⁵ In the pre-1966 period, the communal consciousness was limited to those sections and classes who worked in the modern urban-based sector of the economy, but in the subsequent period — marked by rapid social change and political crisis — beginning perhaps from the early 1970s, its social universe widened which by the 1980s assumed serious proportions.

In Indian society the urges and aspirations of lower castes and the aspiring middle castes have taken the form of cultural renaissance or even 'cultural rebellion.'²⁶ As a

parties and individuals with secular orientations did make a modest contribution in easing tension.

24. J. Rothschild, n. 8, pp. 145-146.

25. We do not subscribe to the view that elites can act in isolation (or autonomously) from the social groups whose interest they represent.

26. Mark Juergensmeyer, *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement Against*

result of the encounter with Islam, the religious stirrings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries represented such cultural renaissance through which the rigours and disabilities of the caste system were sought to be mitigated. This milieu gave birth to the Sikh religion in the sixteenth century. This Sikh movement — through the lineage of ten gurus — tried to give this egalitarian urge and ethos a more permanent character. The growing following of the gurus in course of time brought them into conflict with the Mughal power. The resulting persecution at the hands of the ruling power changed the character of this hitherto pacific movement into a militant one. In a half century after the demise of the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, Sikh guerrilla bands organised into *Misls* acquired a territorial base in central Punjab and in the province of Delhi.

At the end of the 18th century, Ranjit Singh, a head of a *Misl*, occupied Lahore and in due course was able to unite all trans-Sutlej *Misls* under his control and assume the title of Maharaja. In the ensuing 19th century, Ranjit Singh extended his control to the other adjacent territories to the north and north-western region. The Cis-Sutlej Sikh rulers came under the suzerainty of the British rule in the early 19th century while Sikh rule in the trans-Sutlej territories continued till 1949.²⁷

The question may be posed: how far was Sikh rule able to weld the different religious groups into a common Punjabi identity. Khushwant Singh answers that it led to the 'resurrection of the spirit of Punjabi nationalism which had almost been killed by Banda.'²⁸ Percival Spear takes a different position and points out that 'no Punjab nation had been

born. Punjabi unity was in fact further off than ever.'²⁹

At the moment we are primarily concerned with the changes in Punjabi society as a result of Sikh rule which in the core-Sikh territories lasted for a maximum period of 90 years.³⁰ The establishment of Sikh rule led to the replacement of Mughals and Afghans in the top echelons of the ruling class. In the territories under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in the heyday of his rule, Sikhs occupied 60 per cent of the top positions (which included important *Jagirdaris*), the remaining positions were shared by both Hindus and Muslims. At the lower rung of the administration, Muslim representation was more or less in proportion to their population — Hindus perhaps were over-represented. Sikhs, it may be mentioned, formed less than 10 per cent of the total population.³¹

Under Sikh rule, considerable revenue-free land, by way of charity (*dharmarth*), was assigned to the individuals and institutions for religious and charitable purposes. Assignees belonged to all the three major faiths, but those belonging to the Sikh faith received the largest measure of *dharmarth* (or *madad-i-ma'ash*) grants. The most prominent of these grantees were Sodhis and Bedis.³² The grants were also assigned to persons engaged in various types of priestly services, such as *granthis*, *ragis* (reciters and singers of holy hymns) etc. Grants were also assigned to *purohits* and *brahmins* (Hindu priests), and also to *Shaikhs* and *sayyids* (Muslim divines). Historical religious places too received the favours of the ruler. 'The Sikh rulers alienated much larger share of their revenue in favour of religious groups than their Mughal predecessors.'³³ Some of these religious and charitable

Untouchability in 20th Century Punjab (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982), pp. vii-viii.

27. Percival Spear, *A History of India*, Vol. 2. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), pp. 134-140; Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 1: 1469-1839 (Delhi: Oxford U.P. 1974); J.S. Grewal, *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Essays in Sikh History* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1972).

28. Khushwant Singh, *Ibid.*, p. 183.

29. Spear n. 27, p. 135.

30. Indu Banga, *Agrarian System of the Sikhs: Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1978), p. 1.

31. Indu Banga, 'The Ruling Class in the Kingdom of Lahore', *Journal of Regional History*, Vol. III, 1982, pp. 18-19.

32. Guru Nanak belonged to the Bedi sub-caste, and the last seven gurus to the Sodhi sub-caste.

33. Banga, n. 30, p. 167.

centres (including many in the far-flung rural areas) also provided the traditional type of education, especially through religious scriptures in vernacular languages.³⁴ This naturally provided a strong base for the development of traditional religious and social networks in Punjabi society.

The British annexation of the Lahore kingdom in 1849 united the two parts of the Punjab — trans and 'Cis-Sutlej' territories.³⁵ After nearly half a century of British rule in the Punjab, Muslims formed nearly half of the total population, Hindus were around 40 per cent and Sikhs little less than 9 per cent. There was a certain degree of overlap between Hindu and Sikh communities.

Sikh society was able to mitigate certain rigours of the caste system; it also provided considerable social mobility to peasant castes, especially to the Jats, and other backward castes; it also ensured a certain degree of equality — Islam and British impact too helped this process — but still caste distinctions persisted in Sikh society. According to the 1881 census, the Jat peasantry formed 2/3rd of the total Sikh population, the next in numerical importance being the artisan and servicing castes and outcastes. The higher caste Sikhs, Khatri and Aroras in terms of the extant Hindu caste hierarchy, together formed barely 4.5 per cent of the Sikh society.³⁶ Around 90 per cent of the Khatri and a considerable majority of Aroras still remained within the Hindu fold. The other higher castes, such as Brahman, Bania, Sud, etc., were almost outside the Sikh society. In the next fifty years, the Sikh population increased among those castes which were already over-represented

34. Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1983, revised).

35. We are taking into account the territories of the British Punjab including princely states, but excluding North-Western Frontier province.

36. W.H. McLeod, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community: Five Essays* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975), p. 93.

37. The artisan and servicing castes and outcastes' proportion increased while that of Khatri and Arora castes in the Sikh society declined by 1931. The Jat Sikh still

in 1881.³⁷ This further divided the two communities along caste, class and occupational lines as well.

In the early period of British rule, the introduction of the money economy, and the new administrative and judicial set-up had an adverse effect on the peasantry which in the central and western plains of the Punjab belonged predominantly to the Muslim and Sikh communities — in the south-eastern and hilly areas the peasantry was mainly Hindu. In view of occasional crop failures, litigations in courts and usurious interest rates, the peasantry got burdened with debt. And in the event of the non-payment of debts it had to mortgage its land to the moneylenders. The moneylenders generally belonged to the Hindu mercantile castes. Despite economic hardships, Sikh landowning peasantry occupied a dominant position in the social and cultural life of village society. Thus, for the Sikh peasantry, economic issues were more salient than purely social and cultural issues.

The Sikh community was predominantly rural and it formed less than five per cent of Punjab's urban population. Its leading urban component comprised small Khatri and Arora mercantile classes engaged in trade and professions, and a sprinkling of landed aristocrats. In the late 19th century, it is this small urban class which provided political and cultural leadership to the community. It faced competition in trade for scarce jobs from the more numerous members of the other two communities. At the social level, the deeper kinship relations still operated within a particular caste or within a group of castes related to each other by the similarity of occupations and life styles. For the small Sikh urban community belonging to Khatri-Arora and allied castes, the kinship ties with their more numerous caste fellows still in the Hindu fold, suffered a setback as communal identities became the overriding loyalties. So, for these highly literate Sikh caste groups, intraclass economic competition with Hindu urbanites got compounded

formed more than 50 per cent of the Sikh population. The Sikh peasant castes together constituted around 2/3rd of the total Sikh population.

with social tensions arising from their unfavourable social situation in urban settings.³⁸

The social tension arose out of the gradual snapping of the older kinship and caste ties between the two religious communities belonging to the same mercantile castes. The minority position of the Sikhs within this class, and the rise of aggressive communal consciousness created greater insecurity for the former. In this situation of emotional stress, the urban Sikhs yearned for spiritual solace through a wider, and emotionally deeper, religious brotherhood. The resurrection and reinterpretation of the rich Sikh cultural heritage through the Singh Sabha movement was the natural outcome. The movement also appealed to the landed aristocracy, Sikh princes, the priestly class and the theologians patronised by the princes. In due course it would strike a responsive chord among other sections of Punjabi society. For the masses the response possibly arose from the deeper cultural roots of the Sikh movement in the soil of Punjab. For the lower and the middle castes it also satisfied their urge for social mobility.

The first Singh Sabha was established at Amritsar in 1873. It (i) undertook to restore Sikhism to pristine purity; (ii) edit and publish historical and religious books; (iii) propagate current knowledge, using Punjabi as a medium and start magazines and newspapers in this language; (iv) reform and bring back into the Sikh fold the apostates.³⁹ In the next three decades many Singh Sabhas came into exist-

38. Kenneth W. Jones in explaining the rise of communal identities in late 19th century among the three competing communities traces it to the 'alienation' and 'marginality' of the newly educated classes of these communities. See his, 'Social Change and Religious Movements in Nineteenth Century Punjab', in M.S.A. Rao, ed., *Social Movements in India*, Vol. 2 (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1979) pp. 4-5; Richard G. Fox, 'Urban Class and Communal Consciousness in Colonial Punjab: The Genesis of India's Intermediate Regime', *Modern Asian Studies*, 18, no. 3, pp. 480-83.

39. Harbans Singh, 'Sikhism: Challenge and Response (1849-1873)', *Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion*, 2, no. 1 (April 1983), pp. 96-97.

tence in various towns and even in some villages. This culminated in the formation of a coordinating central body, Chief Khalsa Diwan, at Amritsar. In 1908 the first Sikh Educational Conference was organised, and since then regular annual conferences have been held.

In the course of time most of the aims of the first Singh Sabha movement were fulfilled. This brought about a cultural renaissance among the Sikhs through the creation of a network of educational institutions, publication of magazines, pamphlets, and learned commentaries and expositions on Sikh religion, its tradition and history. At times, the band of preachers employed by the Diwan made references to the past glories of the Sikh nation and Sikh rule, by which they compared 'their present degraded condition to the hardship and oppression practised on the Sikhs under Moghul rule.'⁴⁰

In the rural areas, the message of the Singh Sabha was spontaneously carried by Sikh religious divines, more especially in the Cis-Sutlej Sikh princely States, and in the core areas of the Lahore kingdom of Ranjit Singh. To elaborate the point that the seeds of the movement sprouted naturally from the historical antecedents, we may mention the name of Sant Attar Singh (1866-1927), a most revered Sikh saint (hailing from an ordinary peasant family), who devoted his whole life in spreading the message of Sikhism in various parts of the Punjab, especially in the Malwa region in the south-east of river Sutlej.⁴¹

In the rural plains of central Punjab, dominated by Sikh and Muslim peasantry, the leadership to the Hindu community was provided by the Hindu mercantile castes, Khatri, Bania, Arora, followed by the ritually higher brahman. These castes 'possessed a tradition of innovation, of creative response to cultural and political change.' In view of their higher educational

attainments and skill in literary and business acumen they had a lead over the other communities in business, commerce, administration and the professions.⁴² At the psychological level, the western impact created uneasiness about their cultural identity. The rising Hindu elite also got scared by the 'nightmare' of conversion that struck at two segments of the Hindu social structure — outcastes and upper caste students attending the newly established Christian schools. The former threatened Hindu society at its weakest point. Already lost were masses of outcastes who had converted to Islam and Sikhism.⁴³

In this period of cultural uneasiness of the English-educated Hindus, the message of Swami Dayanand through the founding of the Arya Samaj in Punjab in 1877, provided hope and pride in their Hindu heritage. The samaj preached that the caste of a person be determined by merit rather than birth. Further, the reformed Hinduism with its belief in monotheism (based on *Vedas*) and simplified rituals free from 'orthodoxy and idol worship' made it more palatable to the western educated Hindus.⁴⁴

Of all the provinces in India, the Arya Samaj made the greatest impact in the Punjab. The expansion of the movement led to its division into a moderate college party, which controlled the educational institutions, and the radical wing controlling the Samaj organisation, the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha. This division far from weakening the movement 'did more to invigorate the movement.'⁴⁵ The radical wing devoted its whole energy to '*Ved Prachar*' and missionary activities.

42. Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19th Century Punjab* (New Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1976) pp. 3-4, 1-27.

43. Kenneth W. Jones, 'Communalism in Punjab: The Arya Samaj Contribution', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 28, no. 1 (November 1968), pp. 42-43.

44. Norman G. Barrier, 'The Arya Samaj and Congress Politics in the Punjab, 1894-1908', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 26, no. 3 (May 1967), pp. 363-364.

45. Kenneth W. Jones, *Arya Dharm*, n. 42, P. 186.

The militant wing carried out *Shuddhi* or proselytizing activities more vigorously, the purpose of *Shuddhi* being to reclaim those who had recently been converted to other religions, especially to Islam, and to prevent the conversion of outcastes by abolishing untouchability.

In the early period of the *Shuddhi* movement, the Singh Sabha cooperated with the Arya Samaj, but soon this cooperation gave way to direct confrontation. In 1900, the Aryas purified a group of outcaste Rahtia Sikhs into 'pure caste Hindus.' For the Sikh community this was 'a direct threat, potentially as dangerous as Christian and Islamic conversion.'⁴⁶ With the Muslims the confrontation took more serious dimension, at times taking the form of riots. With Muslims the *Shuddhi* movement acted 'to reinforce existing communal separation.' With Sikhs it was meant 'to clarify overlapping identities.'

The Arya Samaj, like the Singh Sabha movement, provided an organisational network for intra-communal solidarity, and its message was disseminated through magazines, newspapers, religious treatises and commentaries. They also propagated their new reinterpreted world view through educational institutions, and dedicated (and paid) band of preachers. Similar type of movements took shape among the Muslims as well, with some of the important cultural elites equally active in the political sphere.

Writing about the state of affairs at the turn of the century, Kenneth W. Jones says: 'Pattern of conflict became institutionalized; provocations produced set responses. What has been implicit in the nature of Punjab society now became explicit. Tensions might increase or decrease, but beneath the surface fears, suspicion and hatred remained. The existent divisions of Punjabi society between religion, language, and script deepened. By 1900 communalism became the dominant form of identity in Punjab.'⁴⁷

46. Kenneth W. Jones, 'Communalism in Punjab: The Arya Samaj Contribution', n. 43, p. 50.

47. *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

40. D. Petrie, *Developments in Sikh Politics (1900-1911) — A Report to Government of India* (Amritsar: Chief Khalsa Diwan, nd), p. 32.

41. Teja Singh, *Jeewan Katha Gurmukh Pire Sant Attar Singh Ji Maharaj* (Patiala: Languages Department, Punjab, 1970).

In the political sphere, the Aryas got activated on so many issues impinging on the economic interests of the Hindu urban classes. From 1899 onwards, they joined the Congress in increasing numbers and, in a sense, this reinforced the Hindu character of the Punjab Congress.⁴⁸ At the national level Aryas and their leading figure, Lala Lajpat Rai, co-operated with the extremist wing of the Congress led by B.G. Tilak and his associates.

By 1907, the Arya leaders realised that their association with the Congress had not helped them in protecting their class interests and instead had invited suspicion and discrimination from the government. So they turned away from the Congress and took to the anchor of communal solidarity.

Some of the important events which led to this change of attitude may be mentioned. The indebtedness of the peasantry and the mortgaging of their land to the money lenders—who generally belonged to the Hindu mercantile castes—led to widespread discontent among the peasantry. In order to mitigate the discontent and to keep the loyalty of the landowning classes, the government passed the Land Alienation Act, 1900. In the words of P.H.M. Van den Dungen the Act in due course 'had accomplished the main ends of its advocates.'⁴⁹ As the Act benefited the scheduled agricultural castes, it 'created serious discontent' among the Hindu trading castes.⁵⁰

In 1907, agitation against the colonisation Bill in the newly opened canal colonies for a time united urban leaders like Lajpat Rai and the peasantry. But this proved to be a temporary episode.⁵¹

On the heel of this event, new constitutional proposals announced separate electorates which the

Punjabi Hindus viewed as a concession to the Muslims. In order to protect their interests, Hindu elites took recourse to the development of Hindu cultural and political organisations. The Hindu Sabhas took the place of district associations and the local Congress branches. 'By the summer of 1908 each district had a Hindu Sabha affiliated with the Punjab Hindu Sabha in Lahore.'⁵² The Punjab Hindu Sabha spearheaded the movement which led to the founding of the All India Hindu Mahasabha. During the period 1907 to 1914, five Hindu Sabha conferences were held in major towns of Punjab.⁵³

Uptil 1919, Chief Khalsa Diwan, which commanded a network of Sikh religious, educational and social organisations, was the only body which articulated Sikh political interests. It was due to the Diwan's strong representation that Sikhs too were accorded separate electorates (alongwith the Muslims) under the new Montford reforms (1919).

The first secular, nationalist and revolutionary movement under the name of 'Hindustan Ghadar Party' was launched on the American-Canadian Pacific coast. The social base of the movement was mainly provided by the Sikh peasant immigrants of central Punjab although it included members from all the major communities. The uprising in India was launched in 1914—and despite its heroic saga of sacrifice and great suffering—the movement was curbed by the government in 1917.⁵⁴ The movement, however, left its impact in the rural areas of the central Punjab, which in the coming decades gave birth to the various left-secular groups and parties—probably the only genuine secular-nationalist movement in the province. These forces, however, proved weak compared to the purely communal or nominally secular

forces as the latter were more fully entrenched in the social structure.

In the socio-political realm, this period witnessed the emergence of a powerful anti-imperialist, reformist, and militant gurdwara reform movement in the early 1920s. Its dominant stream⁵⁵ in due course controlled the newly created Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) and Shiromani Akali Dal. Through this 'stream' the small urban Sikh middle class was able to build a coalition with tradition-oriented rural masses, especially the Sikh peasantry. At the cultural level, the religio-political ideology propounded by the cultural-cum-political elites strengthened Sikh religious identity. It also affected the social structure in the central Punjab districts by strengthening the numerical proportion of the Sikhs in the rural areas through the propagation of the Sikh faith that found ready acceptance.⁵⁶ Sikh population in the erstwhile Punjab increased from a bare 9 per cent of the total population in 1901 to nearly 15 per cent in 1941.

The smaller stream of the gurdwara reform movement was left-oriented, consistently pro-nationalist and was represented by groups such as the Kirti Kisan Party, the Punjab wing of the Communist Party in India etc. Both the streams—tradition-oriented Akali and leftist—cooperated with the urban Hindu-based Punjab Congress Party, which imparted a federal character to the national movement in the province.

The Shiromani Akali Dal in the pre-Independence period was obviously based on the rich heritage of

55. In this 'dominant stream,' we are including various splinter Akali groups led by leaders like Baba Kharak Singh, Giani Sher Singh. The smaller stream, in due course, separated from the Shiromani Akali Dal and formed left-oriented, genuinely nationalist groups, such as Kirti-Kisan Party, and the CPI.

56. The presence of sufficient number of Sikhs already in particular caste-cum-occupational groups acted as a lodestone effect. Of course there were other influences such as the simple message of Sikhism—the faith being a growth of the native soil—and further, preference in army recruitments to the Sikhs may be another contributory factor.

48. Barrier, n. 44, p. 363.

49. P.H.M. Van Den Dungen, *The Punjab Tradition: Influence and Authority in Nineteenth-Century India* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972), p. 286.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 185.

51. Master Hari Singh, *Punjab Peasant in Freedom Struggle*, Vol. 2 (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1984), pp. 19-25.

52. Barrier, n. 44, pp. 363-379.

53. C. Baxter, *The Jana Sangh: A Biography of an Indian Political Party* (Bombay: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 8.

54. Bhagat Singh Bilga, 'Ghadar-Movement' in Master Hari Singh, n. 51, pp. 40-74; Harish K. Puri, *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organisation and Strategy* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1983).

the Sikhs exemplified by certain established traditions, ideals and practices. But how these ideals and traditions were interpreted by the party, ideologues and cultural elites in modern times is influenced to a greater or lesser extent by the interests of the social classes the elites represented. The majority of these ideologues (in the cultural and political sphere) lived in urban locales where Sikhs happened to be a small minority. Incidentally, only 5 per cent of the total Sikh population of Punjab lived in urban areas in 1921.⁵⁷ They feared, perhaps rightly, the absorption into the larger Hindu society. This seemed to be especially true of those urban castes, such as Khatri and Arora, whose large majority of caste fellows being Hindus might have exercised a lodestone effect. In the Sikh majority castes in the rural areas, the lodestone effect has generally operated in the opposite direction. This explains the persistence of the Sikh 'little tradition' among the Sikhs in the rural areas without leading to any fear of losing their Sikh identity.⁵⁸

The basic ideological framework of the Akali Dal revolves around the concept that Sikhs constitute a separate political entity. 'According to this, Sikhism is not a religion like other religions. By religion others understand a relationship between the individual and God, whereas the Sikh religion concerns itself with the whole activity of man in the context of this world.'⁵⁹ Further, for the Sikhs, religion is inseparable from politics. In a foreword written for a book, Master Tara Singh argues that 'there is not the least doubt that the Sikh religion can live only as long as the Panth exists as an organized entity.'⁶⁰

This is further elaborated by Sarup Singh, the founder president of the All India Sikh Student Fede-

ration. 'Unlike the past the modern attack is not on our persons but on our ideology. We are told for example that religion is a private matter for an individual. This single innocent looking sentence has done more harm to Sikhism and the Khalsu... than can be easily realised. Except in corporate existence and solidarity the Khalsa, based as it is on Sikhism, has no meaning.'⁶¹

This great concern for Sikh solidarity is defended by the Akali ideologues on the grounds that it has provided a protective shield to a young community, and helped it in maintaining its distinct (and separate) identity. As this ideology is supposedly based on Sikh traditions and ideals it has exercised strong influence on the tradition-oriented Sikh masses. It may be remembered that this traditionalist-cum-revivalist ideology was propounded by urban Akali ideologues in a socio-historical milieu when communal consciousness among the competing religious communities had been the dominant consciousness. Although the ideological systems are the result of a particular socio-historical milieu, they, however, run the risk of becoming closed systems, and may prevent critical and sociological examination of their contents and, quite often, tie people to outmoded ideas.

On the positive side, Akali ideology, it seems, has acted as a protective shield to the community, but its other dimension is that it may breed a certain degree of dogmatism and intolerance. In view of the incompetence of this author in this domain, and at the risk of being dismissed as simplistic, he suggests the re-examination of this ideology keeping in view its relevance to a modern plural society, such as India. Does this ideology need to be tempered with humanistic values which are at the core of Sikhism (and other great religions of the world)? The re-examination becomes all the more important in view of the crucial role which this ideology has played in Akali

politics and political developments in the pre-and-post-Independence periods.

In legislative politics, the major political parties were motivated by the community-based interests and class interests taking the form of landowning rural classes versus the urban mercantile classes—the latter happened to be predominantly Hindu. The legislative arena for a greater part of this period was dominated by the National Unionist Party led by Fazl-i-Husain. It was a common forum for landed notables belonging to the three communities. Prior to the mid-1940s, it secured almost total support of the Muslim community. The party, naturally, protected Muslim interests on the plea that the community was backward. The Hindu and Sikh political groups dubbed it as communal. It seems the party did have a pro-Muslim bias in view of the overall communal consciousness.

Prior to 1937, the representation of Hindu communal groups and parties in the legislature far exceeded that of the Congress Party. The Congress and its ally, the Akali Dal, on the aftermath of the 'Non-Cooperation' and Khilafat movements decided against office acceptance in the provincial executives under the Government of India Act, 1919. The Hindu political groups—like landed Sikh notables—opted for office acceptance in order to protect their community and class interests. It seems the leaders of these Hindu groups were more fully entrenched in the prevailing social structure. As to the support base of these leaders, Gerald A. Heeger writes: 'Most of these men were active in the various Hindu communal and sectarian associations which had sprung up in Punjab... in the early part of the century—Hindu Sabhas, the reformist Arya Samajes, the orthodox Sanatan Dharam Sabhas.'

Despite sectarian differences, these various bodies were united by their common concern for Hindu interests.⁶²

62. Gerald A. Heeger, 'The Growth of the Congress Movement in Punjab, 1920-1940,' *Journal of Asian Studies* 32, n. 1 November 1972, p. 41.

57. K.L. Tuteja, *Sikh Politics, 1920-1940* (Kurukshetra: Vishal Publications, 1984), p. 22.

58. Of course in recent years the Sikh 'great tradition' is being emulated in the rural areas as well.

59. Baldev Raj Nayar, *Minority Politics in Punjab* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1966), p. 68.

60. Quoted from *Ibid.*, p. 69.

61. Quoted from, Joyce Pettigrew, 'A Description of Discrepancy between Sikh Political Ideals and Sikh Political Practice', in Myron J. Aronoff (ed.), *Political Anthropology Year Book*, Vol. I (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1980), pp. 161-162.

Till the 1930s, Sikh political interests in the Punjab legislature were looked after by a few independents and Sikh notables in the Chief Khalsa Diwan. The latter in due course extended its support to the Unionist Party.⁶³

In the first election, under the Government of India Act, 1935, the Unionist Party won 95 seats (out of 175). In addition to the bulk of Muslim seats it included 13 Hindu Unionists, and almost all Hindu and Sikh scheduled caste members. Chief Khalsa Diwan's political wing, the Khalsa National Party, with 14 members also joined the Unionist government. The urban Hindu support to the government, soon after, was reduced to one independent, Mahohar Lal, and a few of his personal supporters.⁶⁴

For the first time, the Congress won 18 seats which included 11 Hindus, i.e., 1/4th of the total Hindu seats, and five Sikhs belonging to the various left-oriented groups or parties. By 1945, the Congress increased its strength to 33 members in the Assembly. The reason for the Congress growth was that its dominant faction led by Gopi Chand Bhargava strongly espoused urban Hindu interests against the pro-agriculturists legislation of the Unionist government. Secondly, the Unionist Party leader, Sikandar Hayat Khan, while maintaining the independent entity of the party, allowed its Muslim members to have Muslim League membership as well. This left the Hindu groups no alternative except the Congress.⁶⁵

After the 1937 elections, the Akali Dal joined the Congress Legislature Party. But in 1940, Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader, fearing that the Congress may accept the demand for Pakistan which may adversely affect Sikh interests, moved away from the Congress Party. In 1942, the dominant faction of the Akali Dal entered into coalition

with the Unionists. This led to the merging of the Khalsa National Party with the dominant Akali group — thus uniting the two major Sikh parties. A few pro-Congress Akalis, like P.S. Kairon, joined the Congress.

The Akali Dal under Master Tara Singh's leadership now adopted an increasingly independent stand in the matter of Sikh interests. This led to suspicion among the Hindus which found strident expression in the local vernacular press. Master Tara Singh in turn 'attacked the Punjabi Hindus for trying to include Sikhs in the category of Hindus and he added the Sikhs did not wish to be dominated by the Muslims or absorbed by the Hindus.'⁶⁶

The 1946 Punjab Assembly election results reflected polarisation of the communities on communal lines. The Congress still retained some support among the Sikhs, but mutual suspicion and distrust between the two communities persisted, and got further aggravated in the post-Independence period.

One the aftermath of partition, the demographic complexion of the Indian Punjab (then called East Punjab) underwent a radical change. The influx of Hindu-Sikh migrants from western Punjab increased the urban population. Hindus, with 64 per cent, formed a majority of the State population. Sikhs, concentrated in the central Punjab plains — more or less equivalent to the present Punjab State — were around 33 per cent.⁶⁷ Of the total Sikh population of the central Punjab plains over 88 per cent lived in the rural areas, and less than 12 per cent in the urban.⁶⁸

The developments in the early years of post-partition had a differential impact on different social groups and communities. At the moment, we are concerned with its impact on two leading groups of Sikh society, the small urban middle class and the Sikh peasantry. The

majority of Sikh peasants in the canal colonies of western Punjab were migrants from the central Punjab plains on the Indian side. So, after the partition these peasants were allotted Muslim evacuee land in or near their ancestral places. Naturally, they faced not any great hardship in adjusting to the new situation. Khatri and Arora caste groups formed the leading section of the urban Sikh middle class. In the urban locales they found limited opportunities for trade. In trade and job opportunities in private and public sectors, they faced competition with the more numerous Hindus.⁶⁹

There were less visible difficulties at the social level. As the majority of their caste-fellows or those belonging to the related castes happened to be within the Hindu fold, the accident of difference in religion led to the weakening or even snapping of these traditional social ties, including deeper kinship relations. In the elected legislative bodies at the State level and local bodies in the towns, they faced bleak prospects. The political power in the State legislative arena was jointly shared by the elites from the urban Hindu middle class and the rural Sikh peasantry. The older middle class — who nurtured the 'main Akali stream' in its formative years and laid its ideological foundations — became marginal to the emerging power centres based on the numerical strengths of the competing social groups.⁷⁰

In the unfavourable socio-political milieu, this 'older Sikh urban middle class'⁷¹ turned increasingly to

63. Kushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Vol. 2, n. 27; pp. 221-225.

64. Stephen Oren, 'The Sikhs, Congress and the Unionists in British Punjab, 1937-1945', *Modern Asian Studies*, 8, part 3, pp. 397-418.

65. Heeger, n. 62, p. 40.

66. Stephen Oren, n. 64, p. 413.

67. This is based on the 1961 census figures.

68. Paul Wallace, 'The Political Party System of Punjab, India: A Study of Factionalism,' University of California, Berkley, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1966 p. 74.

69. Khushwant Singh, Vol. 2, n. 77, pp. 291-292.

70. In the 1952 Assembly elections to the Punjab legislature not a single urban Sikh belonging to the trading castes got elected. The situation remained more or less the same in 1957 Assembly elections. See M.S. Dhami, 'Changing Support Base of the Congress Party in Punjab, 1952-1980,' *Punjab Journal of Politics*, 8, no. 2, (January-June 1984), p. 80; A.S. Narang, *Storm Over the Sutlej: The Akali Politics* (New Delhi: Gitanjali, 1983), p. 156.

71. The present Sikh middle class is more variegated as it also includes members from peasant and even artisan castes in addition to the trading castes. The older term 'Sikh middle class' relates to the latter.

religion for solace, and to the brotherhood of the larger religious community. Master Tara Singh and others from this social segment, still occupied top leadership positions in the Akali Dal.⁷² This social group also provided leadership to the Sikh community in the cultural sphere. These 'cultural elites' edited magazines, newspapers, wrote extensively on Sikh religion, history and politics; and through their literary works contributed significantly to the development of the Sikh ethos and Punjabi literature. In short, the 'cultural elites' acted as opinion builders for the Sikh community. A dominant section from this group pleaded for the maintenance of a separate political entity for the Sikhs. In this connection, Joyce Pettigrew rightly observes: 'what (older) urbanite gave to the Sikh community was a sense of identity. By elaborating aspects of Sikh traditions, urbanite intellectuals strengthened the community's sense of cultural homogeneity.'⁷³

In the changed situation, the Congress Party became the ruling party. Immediately after Independence, and then again in 1956, Akali legislators in the Punjab Assembly joined the Congress Party. This process strengthened the Congress base amongst the peasantry and other rural classes. As the Sikh peasantry formed nearly 2/3rd of the total Sikh population, concentrated in a compact area of the central Punjab plains, this led to the rise of peasant leaders like Partap Singh Kairon, Giani Kartar Singh and Swaran Singh in the legislative arena. During Kairon's chief ministership of the State (1956-1964) rural development schemes were encouraged, and the peasantry also found a fair share of jobs in the administration. So, till the mid-1960s, the peasantry, predominantly Jat Sikh, remained satisfied with the government.

72. Of course a few of his lieutenants later joined the Congress Party.

73. Joyce Pettigrew, 'The Influence of Urban Sikhs on the Development of the Movement for a Punjabi-Speaking State,' *Journal of Sikh Studies*, 5, no. 1 (February 1978) p. 163. The sense of religious identity has been weaker among the scheduled castes and other lower caste Hindus and Sikhs.

Despite the aforementioned positive achievements of the government, the Congress failed to take a principled stand on the communally sensitive issues, such as reporting of the correct mother tongue in the decennial censuses in the Punjabi-speaking region, medium of instruction for elementary education and, finally, the reorganisation of the State on a linguistic basis. These issues created divisions within the Congress on communal lines. In view of this state of affairs P.C. Joshi, a veteran Communist leader, lamented that 'the Congress in the Punjab, after independence, fought neither Sikh nor Hindu communalism, on any serious principled basis, but appeased both, by turns....'⁷⁴

Notwithstanding the ascendancy of the Congress Party till the mid-1960s, the Akali Dal under Master Tara Singh's leadership was able to build a coalition of urban Sikh middle classes with landed notables and the tradition-oriented peasantry. The former, especially the 'older middle classes', formulated the ideology of the party while the latter provided mass support. The religio-political ideology showed little concern with economic issues. In practice it reflected the interests of the middle classes and the rural notables. This conservative stance of the party alienated the poorer sections, especially the landless scheduled castes from the party. It partly explains the poor showing of the party in the legislative arena.⁷⁵ Its religio-political ideology views the whole Sikh community as a corporate entity.

Here is a summary of Master Tara Singh's address to the Sikh Student Federation where he argued that 'power derived through the favour of the Congress would be no real power. The real power ... could accrue only from the solidarity of the community. He urged for this purpose the retention of the independent character of the Sikh body politic. His appeal was openly in the name of the *Panth* and he drew upon

74. P.C. Joshi, 'Triumph of a Just Cause,' in *Punjabi Suba — A Symposium* (Delhi: National Book Club, nd.) p. 91.

75. The party, however, commands the allegiance of religiously devout, and upward mobile sections belonging to the lower castes.

images and symbols from Sikh tradition and history to buttress his argument.⁷⁶ Master Tara Singh also stressed the need of political power for the Sikhs: 'We cannot gain political power without a firm faith in our religious heritage. Equally, our religious faith will wither away without political power.'⁷⁷

From the point view of the defenders of this ideology, it is meant to provide a protective shield to the Sikh community so that its distinct cultural identity be maintained. But in a plural society, in case the notion of 'independent character of the Sikh body politic' is carried to its logical extreme, it may create difficulties in the way of harmonious relations between ethnic groups. To a layman it seems out of tune with the innate catholicity of the Sikh faith. Moreover, in view of the various challenges to the plural society in India — at times from those controlling State power — national minorities have a greater stake in maintaining the pluralistic fabric of the Indian society. In any interpretation of a doctrine, including the doctrines putatively based on religious ideals and traditions, human interests — including class and group interests — inevitably intrude. This underlines the need of viewing ideas and interpreting them in terms of the concrete socio-historical context. One may also ask that in a stratified society when ideology is interpreted in the domain of practical politics, would it serve the interests of all the strata or the interests represented by the dominant elements? These questions posed need to be examined carefully.

Our plea for the re-examination of the Akali Dal's ideology makes possible the exercise of informed human choice in place of blind adherence to a set of ideas and doctrines. This, however, may invite scepticism or even cynicism. It may be argued that given the overall ambience of 'amoral', manipulative and 'zero-sum' phase of Indian politics — and at a time of growing

76. Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs* (New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1983), pp. 337-338.

77. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 343.

mutual estrangement between the two communities — such a plea would invite derision. We, on the other, hold that it is precisely during such difficult times that there is need for introspection and stocktaking.

As to the role of ideology, there are reasons to believe that the inbuilt ideology, especially in critical times, can exercise a certain degree of independent influence on the course of socio-political developments. We hold the view that most of the demands of the Akali Dal and its splinter groups in recent years — including the demands embodied in the Anandpur Sahib resolution — can directly be traced back to its inbuilt ideology which has been shaped in modern times over a period of nearly a century.⁷⁸ We think the present confusion in grasping Punjab's situation is no less due to the dismissive attitude in examining ideologies, especially when delicate questions of religious tradition and ideals are involved.

In the light of the Akali Dal ideology, its demand for a Punjabi speaking State was also couched in religious idioms. In view of the pre-existing stereotypes, the dominant section of the leading Hindu middle class saw in it another ploy to reduce their power and influence. Only the State wing of the Communist Party and a minor socialist party projected the demand as the common demand of the Punjabi people. The sequence of events that followed virtually legitimised the view that crucial political choices in the State were made on ethnic/communal considerations. A State claiming to be secular needs to provide secular infra-structure in the society itself. In India, we have not succeeded on this count, so there is greater urgency to solve ethnic problems through institutional devices — may be through adjusting the federal set-up keeping in view the just aspirations of the concerned nationality groups.

In 1962, the leadership of the dominant Akali Dal was assumed by a religious divine of peasant

78. Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974), pp. 277-286.

Table 1
Percentage Distribution of the Total Population in Punjab by Religion and Four Caste Groups in 1971

Caste group/other religions	Percentage-wise break up of each caste group among Hindus and Sikhs in the total population*		Percentage distribution of total Hindu and Sikh population among four caste groups**
	Hindu %	Sikh %	
1. Higher Castes	15.39 (86)	2.51 (14)	17.90
2. Peasant Castes	4.37 (10)	39.33 (90)	43.70
3. Servicing and Artisan Castes	4.12 (35.5)	7.48 (64.5)	11.60
4. Scheduled Castes	13.83 (56)	10.87 (44)	24.70
Total of four caste groups	37.71	60.19	97.90
Other religions			2.10
Overall total			100.00

*Percentage distribution within each caste group by religion (for Hindus and Sikhs) is given in parentheses.

**These percentages are kept upto one decimal.

stock, Sant Fateh Singh.⁷⁹ He presented the demand purely on the linguistic principle, though at the same time insinuating that the government in its non-acceptance showed discrimination against the Sikhs. He also laid stress on Hindu-Sikh unity. Perhaps in view of his rural social background, Sikh solidarity alone was not the desideratum for him. This incidentally demonstrates that the way a particular ideology is formulated and interpreted is conditioned socially and depends upon historical circumstances. There is no such thing as, a priori, or a 'given' ideology operating in a social vacuum.

After a great deal of Akali agitation and procrastination on the part of the government, it acceded to the demand of a Punjabi-speaking State in 1966.

In the post-1966 Punjab, Sikhs formed 60 per cent of the total population, and Hindus around 38 per cent. The Hindu and the Sikh

79. Some critics who are not quite sympathetic to Sant Fateh Singh attribute his rise (to leadership) to the manipulation of the ruling Congress Party and the government.

communities are not homogeneous entities. For the purpose of this study, they can be divided into four major caste groups: (1) the higher castes (the non-peasant higher castes); (2) peasant castes; (3) servicing and artisan castes; and (4) scheduled castes. Among the scheduled castes the Hindu and Sikh identities are quite weak. For the two top caste groups the religious identities are fairly powerful, especially amongst the well-off members of these groups. Strength and nature of religious identity varies from one social group to another. On the basis of the 1931 and 1971 census we present the reconstructed estimates of the total Punjab population in 1971 in terms of four caste groups and by religion in the Table given.⁸⁰ On the basis of these estimates the population of non-scheduled caste Hindus and Sikhs is around 24 and 49 per cent respectively in the total population.

In the new set-up, the Akali Dal with a peasant leadership followed a pragmatic policy in having alian-

80. These estimates are adapted from the author's, 'Changing Support Base of the Congress Party in Punjab, 1952-80', n. 70, pp. 71-78.

des first in 1967 with the Jana Sangh and the Communist parties, and later with the Janata Party in 1977. The Akali Dal led the coalition governments but invariably the coalitions proved to be unstable. Among others, the primary reason was the ideological incompatibilities between the Akali Dal and Hindu-dominated parties, such as the Jana Sangh. Given the social configuration of the State, the Akali Dal found it difficult to secure legislative majorities on its own.

In the electoral arena in the post-1966 period, the Akali Dal in the rural areas has generally been equated with the interests of the land owning peasantry. The scheduled castes, a large majority of whom are agricultural labourers, have rarely supported the Akali Dal in view of the class cleavage in the rural society. The Communist parties have also enjoyed a modicum of support among a section of the Sikh peasantry. In the 1980 Assembly elections, despite the continuing erosion of the Congress support from the late 1960s to 1980 among the Sikh peasantry, the Congress possibly managed to secure around 14-15 per cent of Sikh peasant support in the State as a whole. Obviously, given the Akali Dal's policies and organisational set up, it was unable to secure legislative majorities on its own.

This partly explains the Akali Dal's switch from legislative politics to cultural protest. Till the early 1980s, the Akalis were mainly concerned with economic issues which related to the Sikh peasantry or the Punjab State as a whole. So in view of their unhappy experience with this strategy they increasingly took to the inbuilt ideology of the Akali Dal formulated in the pre-and early post-Independence period when communal consciousness among the competing communities was dominant.

The last two decades, especially since the mid 1960s, witnessed rapid changes in the socio-economic structure of the State. In the first phase, the green revolution led to a considerable increase in agricultural output, later followed by the slowing

of the growth rate. A modicum of prosperity on the part of the peasantry and enterprising artisan class, led some of them to seek better opportunities in the urban locales or in foreign lands. The new migrants from the rural areas, in addition to economic competition, faced the problem of social adjustment. It may also be mentioned here that in the decade ending 1981, the proportion of urban population in Punjab had increased from 23.7 to 27.7 per cent—the highest rate of increase since Independence.

In the rural social structure, a majority of the artisan and servicing castes and a section of scheduled castes, no longer following their traditional occupations, found increased spatial mobility and outmigration as skilled labourers. A certain degree of prosperity in the rural areas and small towns led to the opening of new gurdwaras, Hindu mandirs and Ravidas temples accompanied by a spurt of religious activities. In a number of rural gurdwaras, regular paid *granthis* (reciters of holy scriptures), generally from lower castes, have been appointed. Among the lower middle class Hindus, *Jagratas* (whole night kirtan) has become quite popular. This has provided some persons fresh avenues of upward social mobility through religious activities and services.

Commercialisation of agriculture and increase in transport and educational facilities has lessened the urban and rural gap. Punjab villages, especially the bigger ones, now get regular delivery of the vernacular newspapers or even magazines, which generally overplay communal issues. This contributes to the creation of a strong resentment, especially among the Sikh peasantry, against the Congress regime for its discriminatory treatment of the farming community and the State as a whole. Due to the hangover of the caste system, the upward mobile sections of the artisan and other lower caste Sikhs suffer from 'status dissonance' due to discrepancy between their economic power and social status. So the increasing pace of modernization in recent years has exacerbated social tensions which,

given the social structure, find expression through religio-political protest.

Given the religious and social network and the mobilizatory potential of religion, the economic and political demands are likely to get better hearing through well organised religio-political groups like the Akali Dal than through the weak class-based secular political parties or groups. The peasant-based Akali leaders, in framing their important policy documents and in deciding important issues take the help of 'cultural elites' with traditional orientations.⁸¹

The latter generally belong to the urban middle classes (including both the older and new entrants from the rural areas). These 'cultural elites', in view of their unfavourable social situations, generally present a strait-jacket and backward looking interpretation of the Akali Dal's religio-political ideology. This amounts to underplaying the humanistic and liberal potentialities of the Sikh faith. The present confusion in the thinking of the Akali leaders is partly due to the limited perspective of the 'cultural elites',⁸² and partly the result of the overall social and political malaise leading to 'amoral' and 'power oriented' politics⁸³ among the factional politicians of the Akali Dal.

The traditional social and religious network helped the militant leader, Sant Bhindranwale, in widening the mass base of the cultural protest. He provided leadership to the various sections of the Sikhs — ranging from retired high-ranking government and army officers to

81. Field notes.

82. With the rise of peasant leadership to the top positions in the Akali Dal, the 'cultural elites' and political elites seem to have divergent economic interests. Further, 'cultural elites' are more oriented towards the inbuilt ideology of the Akali Dal, while the peasant leadership, especially those who partake in legislative politics, are mainly influenced by considerations of power and pragmatic politics. So long as critical conditions prevail the inbuilt ideology will have greater salience.

83. Ashis Nandy, *At the Edge of Psychology: Essays in Politics and Culture* (Delhi Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 112-115, 62-65.

poor rootless ruralites — who were generally outside the power structure of the established Akali leadership. For the ideologically-oriented urban middle classes, Bhindranwale acted as a bridge between them and the tradition-oriented rural masses, thus providing a vision of Sikh solidarity. This provided to the diverse groups emotional sustenance, security and community pride in the face of the anxieties and tensions arising out of the increasing pace of modernization. Of course, in the background, the mundane class and group interests also were at work.

In the prevailing socio-political uncertainties and the pressure from the militant wing — and the rigid bureaucratic attitude of the central government towards Akali demands — the Akali Dal increasingly moved away from the moderate version of its ideology which made a foothold in the early 1960s with the ascendancy of Sant Fateh Singh. Akalis under the pressure of new critical conditions resurrected the older ideology without realizing its anachronistic character — perhaps the process could be traced back to the late 1960s due to the slow infiltration of the committed ideologues as advisors to the Akali leaders.

In this connection we may underline the need for a creative choice in the matter of interpreting religion-based ideology. Wilfred Cantwell Smith's advice to Muslims, in interpreting Islam in modern times, needs to be pondered over by the intelligentsia of other religious communities as well:

'Yet one may perhaps be not overtly bold in surmising that the creative development of Islam as a religion on earth lies rather in the hands of those Muslims whose concern for the forms and institutions evolved in Islamic history is subordinate to their lively sense of a living, active God who stands behind the religion, and to their passionate but rational pursuit of that social justice that was once the dominant note of the faith and the dominant goal of its forms and institutions.'⁸⁴

84. W.C. Smith, *Islam in Modern History* (Princeton; Princeton University

There is some evidence to suggest that the hardliners in (and outside) the Akali movement and the hawkish elements within (and without) the Indian State apparatus, both partake of certain attributes of modernism — rationality, acquisitiveness, and the urge for power and dominance. This modernist credo devoid of institutional checks and morality would surely bring to naught the hope for a just and humane society.

The concomitant government repression and the appalling political mismanagement intensified the movement of cultural protest for which the necessary infrastructure already existed in Punjabi society. The subsequent developments, marked by colossal human suffering, have hardened the communal stereotypes of the two communities. The contemporary crisis of the Indian political system is a symptom of a deeper social and political malaise arising from the erosion of western designed institutions and perhaps also due to the lack of an adequate fit between these institutions and the Indian cultural landscape, (i.e., Indian traditions and ideas).⁸⁵ In less fortunately placed or endowed countries — contemporary global history is replete with instances — the thrust of such movements is generally 'towards "civil war" goals rather than "social revolutionary" goals.'⁸⁶

The gruesome events of late 1984; and the chastening effects of the tragic events since the early 1980s, led to the signing of the Punjab accord between the Prime Minister and Sant Harchand Singh Longowal in July 1985, which has widely been welcomed in and outside the State. The shocking assassination of Sant Longowal within a month of the accord has demonstrated that there are

Press, 1957), pp. 307-308; see also Baig, n. 21, *passims*.

85. Rajni Kothari and Shiv Visvanathan, 'Moving Out of 1984', *Seminar*, no. 305 (January 1985), pp. 24-31; James Manor, 'Anomie in Indian Politics: Origins and Potential Wider Impact', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 18, nos. 19, 20, 21 (May 1983), pp. 725-734; Ashis Nandy, n. 83; Satish Saberwal, 'On the Social Crisis in India: Political Traditions', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n. s.) 18, n. 1 (January-June 1984), 64-84.

86. J. Rothschild, n. 8, pp. 242-243.

still certain elements within the Sikh community — howsoever depleted in strength — who have not reconciled to the accord. One of the reasons is the prevalence of a deep sense of injustice, especially among the Sikh youth, against the patently partisan role of the law enforcing authorities in collusion with certain party functionaries during the November riots. And this feeling needs to be assuaged. Not only that the guilty after indictment by the new commission be brought to book but those holding responsible positions of power, whose bonafides are suspect — and this is fairly established — either be eased out of power or at the minimum these worthies be not given publicity by the government media. These steps would make the task of law enforcing authorities easier, and would at the same time prevent the handful of misguided youths from taking the law into their own hands.

The cultural groups and their movements per se are not secessionist. Whether they join the national stream or pose a separatist challenge depends purely on contextual and situational factors, and here there is place for human choice and ingenuity. We, in the words of C. Wright Mills, need not 'become the utensils of history makers' or 'mere objects of history making.'

In the last two decades, ethnicity based on religion and/or other cultural markers has become a global phenomenon covering both the transitional and advanced societies. In this connection Crawford Young observes: 'The various social processes that are collectively labelled "modernization" are likely to result in heightened levels of cultural consciousness.'⁸⁷ The ethnic/communal groups not only provide emotional sustenance, personal identification to their members — especially in urban locales where there are fleeting and impersonal encounters — but also help them in the competitive arena for material benefits, status and power.

Punjab in the last two decades has witnessed a greater impact of mod-

87. Crawford Young, 'The Temple of Ethnicity: A Review Article', *World Politics*, Vol. XXXV, No. 4, July 1983, 655-56.

ernization compared to other States in the country. The two important segments of Sikh society, urban middle class—a more variegated class at present—and the artisan and other backward caste Sikhs have acquired a modicum of economic prosperity. As this prosperity has not ensured a commensurate equality in status and power to these sections, this has led to 'status dissonance.' The minority position of the Sikhs in urban locales, and the dislocating effects of modernisation, especially in the case of new migrants from the rural areas, has added to their economic insecurities and social anxieties. This existential situation has led them to seek the anchor of the broader Sikh brotherhood.

The Sikh peasantry, the largest social group in the State, till the late 1960s was able to combine economic well being with status and power in the rural society. This group was a major partner in political power in the ruling Congress coalition at the State level till the 1960s, and later at intervals through the Akali Dal-led coalition governments. In the 1980 Assembly elections, the ruling Congress Party lost the support of a large majority of peasantry—this process perhaps started in the late 1960s. So the Congress government which took office in 1980 enjoyed very little legitimacy from the Sikh peasantry, the largest group in the State. By the early 1980s, the major segments in Sikh society were almost alienated from the ruling Congress regime in the State. The prevailing political scenario provided a fertile ground for the launching of a religion-based cultural movement.

With this brief digression, we make a few observations on the aftermath of the Punjab accord. In order to restore the political process in the State, the central government has ordered Assembly elections in the last week of September 1985. Despite threats of increased terrorist activities from the militant groups, almost all the recognised political parties have joined the electoral fray.

38 The major contest is obviously between the Congress(I) and the Akali Dal. Given the social polarisation on communal lines, with the possible

exception of the scheduled castes and the supporters of the two Communist parties. The Akali Dal, for the first time in the electoral history of the State, hopes to secure legislative majority on its own in the 117 member Legislative Assembly. As to the social complexion of the Assembly seats, nearly 77 seats are almost rural while another 40 are urban or semi-urban. The Akali Dal, in case it is able to contain factionalism can secure around 55 seats, and the Janata and the Communist parties who are likely to extend support to the Akalis may bag half a dozen or few more seats.

Even if, hypothetically, the Akali-led government comes to power, it too is likely to face the same problem. It may not be acceptable to the Punjabi Hindus and a considerable majority of the scheduled castes. This problem could only be rectified if the Akali Dal recasts its anachronistic ideology and policies in such a way as to provide a fair deal and representation to Hindus and scheduled castes, and at the same time show greater solicitude for the poor and small peasantry who incidently form a large majority of the Sikh peasantry. The Hindus, on their part need to identify with Punjab and the Punjabi culture which is after all the common heritage of the two communities. This will help in the enriching of the composite Punjabi culture.

It may be reiterated that there is no inherent contradiction between the Hindu-Sikh identities, Punjabi identity and the national identity.

So far most of our fellow social scientists have been advocating, to put it crudely, a 'straitjacket secularism' and one-dimensional national identity (implicitly decrying regional and other cultural identities)—which seems to have little relevance to the reality on the ground. Professor M.N. Srinivas is very right when he characterises those who disclaim any loyalty to their region as phonies. After the horrible nightmare of tragic events and episodes which have almost shaken the Punjabi social fabric, we need to give up old stereotypes and think afresh on our problems on the basis of a creative and informed choice.

Growth and poverty

JAGDISH BHAGWATI

SINCE the 1970s, development economics has been preoccupied with the question: did we get our development strategy wrong in the 1950s and 1960s?

The question has two components which must be sharply distinguished. *First*, did development economists, and their clients, pursue the wrong objectives? *Second*, were the methods and strategic choices made to achieve the objectives inadequate to the task?

Did we really fall into the ethical trap of considering growth rather than the alleviation of poverty as our objective? Before I respond to that contention, emanating in varying degrees of explicitness from international agencies such as the ILO during the late 1970s, let me stress that this contention may be both true and false.

Admittedly, not everyone among the development economists discussed explicitly the link between growth and poverty. It is somewhat astonishing how some of the formal theoretical literature, for instance, on choice of technology during the 1950s, did not spell out the means and objectives dichotomy explicitly; and I do not recall this literature as addressing questions of poverty or income distribution in any fashion at all.

But it is a *non sequitur* to allege therefore that growth or development was regarded as an end in itself and that poverty was not the true objective.

In fact, in India, which was the focus of intellectual attention during the 1950s for several reasons, reduction of poverty was explicitly discussed during the late 1950s and early 1960s as the object of our planning efforts. In the Planning Commission, where the great Indian planner,

Pitambar Pant, headed the Perspective Planning Division, work was begun at this time on this precise issue. How could we provide 'minimum incomes' for meeting the basic needs of all? Explicitly, therefore, the question was: what was the best strategy to raise the abysmally low incomes of the bottom four deciles to minimally acceptable levels; above therefore an implicit poverty line?

The objective being to provide such minimum incomes, or to ameliorate poverty, rapid growth was decided upon as the instrumentality through which this objective could be implemented.

I can write about this issue, as it happens, from the immediacy of personal experience. For, I returned to India during 1961, to join the Indian Statistical Institute which had a small think-tank attached to Pant's Division in the Planning Commission. Having been brought in by Pant to work as his main economist, I turned immediately to the question of strategy for minimum incomes. I assembled such income distribution data as was then available for countries around the world, the functional and personal, to see if anything striking could be inferred about the relationship between the economic and political system and policies and the share of the bottom three or four deciles.

You can imagine the quality of these data then by looking at their quality now almost a quarter of a century later. Nor did we have then anything systematic on income distribution in the Soviet Union. And we had admittedly nothing on China which was an exotic reality, about to make its historic rendezvous with the Cultural Revolution, but already suggesting to the careful scholar that its economic claims were not to be taken at face value.

The scanning of, and reflection on, the income distribution data

*Extracted from a lecture delivered at the Centre for Advanced Study of International Development Distinguished Speaker Series at Michigan State University, 1985.

suggested that there was no dramatic alternative for raising the poor to minimum incomes except to increase the overall size of the pie. The inter-country differences in the share of the bottom deciles just did not seem substantial enough to suggest any alternative path. The strategy of rapid growth was therefore decided upon, in consequence of these considerations, as providing the only reliable way of making a *sustained*, rather than a one-shot, impact on poverty.

I will presently discuss this strategy and its success or failure in some depth. However, let me return to stress the theme that growth therefore was indisputably conceived to be an instrumental variable, not as an objective *per se*. It is not surprising therefore that the strange assertions to the contrary by institutions and intellectuals who have only belatedly turned to questions of poverty have provoked many of those who were 'present at the creation' to take a backward lance and then to turn again to stare coldly and with scorn at these nonsensical claims.

Gilbert Etienne, the well known sociologist cum-economist, whose heretical and brilliant work on India's Green Revolution I shall soon cite, has exclaimed: 'The claim that development strategies in the 1950s and 1960s overemphasized growth and increases of the GNP at the cost of social progress is a surprising one!...Equally peculiar is the so called discovery of the problem of poverty.' (1982, pp. 194, 195).

Professors T. N. Srinivasan and B.S. Minhas, both of whom have worked with great distinction on questions of poverty and who followed me to join Pant's think-tank, have been even more critical. I am afraid that I have also been moved to write recently in a personal vein: '...on hearing the claim that poverty had only recently been discovered and elevated as a target of development, I fully expected to find that Chapter 1 of my 1966 volume on *The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries* would be titled Growth; behold my surprise when it turned

out to be "Poverty and Income Distribution!"'

Turning then to the question of the efficacy of the growth strategy, let me emphasize that the strategy was conceived as an *activist* strategy. Rapid growth would mean expanding the total pie and thus increasing the absolute incomes of the poor, given the relative stability of the income-distributional shares that the data suggested.

Reinforcing this approach was the independent notion, underlying I believe the celebrated Arthur Lewis model of unlimited supply of labour, that rapid growth would create increasing opportunities for gainful, productive employment of the poor who were *either* in extremely low-productivity occupations in the traditional sector *or* simply in underemployment or unemployment, subsisting in an undernourished state and getting by with a variety of income redistributive devices such as extended family support.

I am not aware of any explicit exercise that worked out the precise income-distributional consequences of growth under alternative specifications of the traditional sector and of the patterns of growth. But I should imagine that the presumption that the absolute incomes of the poor would improve with growth would turn out to be fairly robust in this generic model. And that certainly was our belief, at least as to the central tendency of our planned attempt at accelerated growth.

Not that, with some ingenuity, one could not work out growth scenarios that harm the poor. The pious know that affluence can impoverish one's soul; the economist need not be surprised that it can impoverish one's neighbours too. In fact, my 1958 *Review of Economic Studies* theoretical analysis of 'immiserizing growth' is a demonstration of a yet stronger proposition: that growth can immiserize oneself. And my analysis here builds on the possibility that growth in a country may impact so adversely on its terms of trade that the primary gain from growth is outweighed by the secondary loss from the deteriora-

tion in the terms of trade.

I have often been asked therefore why I did not use this 1958 *RES* model in my work at the Indian Planning Commission to construct scenarios where growth would hurt the poor. In fact, that model was widely used at the time, among others by the distinguished Ragnar Nurkse in his 1959 Wicksell Lectures, in the *international* context.

Nurkse argued that, faced with inelastic external markets and hence even with the prospect of immiserizing growth, developing countries should turn inward in their trade and developmental policies, at least at the margin. And the model certainly has relevance to policy formulation to ensure that growth in some instances does not systematically impoverish the poor further. Thus, if agricultural growth occurs, *a la* my model, in significantly worsened terms of trade for the rural sector, that would impoverish the sector and in turn could immiserize the poor.

The simple reason why I did not work with this model, despite the obvious attachment that a scientist has for his pet creation, is that I did not think it was the appropriate model to use in thinking centrally about the long-run impact of growth on poverty (though its lessons were certainly not lost in putting up flagposts warning about unintended adverse outcomes and suggesting appropriate policy responses).

At the same time, with Nurkse and others, I did consider the model perfectly appropriate to use in thinking about other developmental problems in the international context, including the important problem of the choice of the appropriate developmental strategy as between the import-substituting and export-promoting options. In my view, it is perfectly appropriate to construct models as necessary, reflecting the problem at hand; though, I daresay, ideologically straitjacketed economists are by no means this eclectic and tend to adapt reality to a single model.

Since, therefore, the growth strategy was an *activist* strategy for impacting on poverty, I have always

preferred to call it the *pull-up*, rather than the *trickle-down*, strategy. The trickle-down phrase is reminiscent of 'benign neglect' and its use in the Reagan administration to accompany efforts at dismantling the welfare State have imparted yet other *conservative* connotations to it. The pull-up phrase, on the other hand, correctly conveys a more *radical* interventionist image and the intellectual context in which it emerged was defined by the ethically-attractive objective of helping the poor.

Lest you think that words do not matter, remember your Orwell or the endless battle for the dominant ground between euphemisms and calling a spade a spade. My favourite example from economics is the business schools' preferred use of the word 'multinationals', faintly reminiscent of multilateralism and hence suggestive of a benign and cooperative institution, and the radicals' insistence on calling them 'transnationals', strongly indicative of transgression.

Where did *redistribution* fit into the pull-up strategy? Here, I think that the parameters of the Indian situation played a dominant role in our thinking. The numbers in poverty are simply too large, the country geographically too big, and the politics too pluralistic, to make radical redistribution a feasible or attractive policy there. Even Michal Kalecki, the tough-minded economist who visited India from Poland during 1962, and was one of several distinguished economists who came through at the time, was of the view that redistribution of income was not a meaningful option: 'the trouble with India is that there are too few exploiters and too many exploited.'

But, in the Indian context, we took care to put the pull-up strategy into a total context which included extensive *land reforms* — of which tenancy reform granting security to the cultivator, and abolition of absentee landlordism were the ones that took hold in several areas, though over time and with difficulty — and an increasing, if small, level of outright *public distribution* of social consumption such as clean water,

sanitation, health services and education.

These ideas were influential and came to be shared, I believe, in the practice of planners in a number of developing countries. I have argued elsewhere (1984) that there was a definite optimism during these years that growth could be rapid and that it would indeed impact on poverty.

But by the early 1970s and later, there were increasing claims that called the efficacy of this strategy into doubt. The criticisms took two different forms:

(i) that growth was irrelevant and poverty had increased regardless: a 1977 ILO study (quoted by Etienne, 1982, p. 198) asserted that, 'The number of rural poor in Asia has increased and in many instances their standard of living has tended to fall. Perhaps, surprisingly, this has occurred irrespective of whether growth has been rapid or slow or agriculture has expanded swiftly or sluggishly'; and

(ii) that growth had in fact accentuated poverty: it made the rich richer and the poor poorer; Ghose and Griffin argued in 1979 that 'It is not lack of growth but its very occurrence that led to a deterioration in the conditions of the rural poor' (quoted by Etienne, 1982, p. 198).

In either case, the primary assertion was that poverty had increased rather than diminished, whether despite or because of growth. Critical to the debate therefore has been the question whether, in fact, poverty has increased.

I am persuaded that the claims concerning increasing immiserization, or even stagnation in the living standards, of the poor are false. This is not merely because the controversies among the economists in India where major data sets have been analyzed over three decades strongly suggest that matters *did* improve for the poor (even though these data do not capture public consumption which was an impor-

tant ingredient of the overall developmental strategy). But it is simply because I believe that the statistics on the question are particularly flawed and I like to rely equally on the more optimistic results from the 'naked eye,' and anthropological-cum-longitudinal approach to these problems to make my inferences.

Distinguished social and economic anthropologists such as M.N. Srinivas, Louis Dumont and Polly Hill have remarked, with varying degrees of candidness, on the quality of Indian data on the subject; and, mind you, these are generally regarded as possibly the best statistics in the developing world. The concepts are inadequate; the implementation yet poorer.

Polly Hill (1984, p. 495) has written in frustration and with evident exaggeration that India's pride, 'the All-India National Sample Survey is perhaps the most remarkable example of wasted statistical effort in the entire world!' Srinivas (1976) has complained of the brilliant mathematical statisticians who devise and direct the massive questionnaires to be filled out by field investigators that 'This kind of study cannot be left to the hit and run method of an inferior class of investigators who commute from the cities to nearby villages.'

Nonetheless, the *statistical* results are by no means as depressing as initially claimed. Thus, a careful examination of the estimates of income distribution for India by Bhalla and Vashishtha (1984) concludes that household incomes surveys (as distinct from 'patched-up' National Sample Survey-based estimates) indicate that if households are ranked by *per capita* incomes, neither the bottom 20 per cent nor the bottom 40 per cent exhibit any significant change in their share of income between 1964-65 and 1975-1976. At the same time, of course, *per capita* income has increased in India, so that the constant share would imply a higher absolute level, indicating a decline in poverty.

These surveys however are essentially non-comparable because of differences in definitions and in coverage. Comparable data sets

relate to 1970-71 for the large rural sector. And when these are used, the conclusion is favourable. Absolute poverty calculations, using the Indian poverty line, 'suggest a slight, but significant, decline — from 44 per cent of the population in 1970-71 to 40 per cent in 1975-76.' The authors add that 'the NSS data suggest that rural poverty in 1977-78 was 39 per cent — a decline from the NSS estimate of 46 per cent in 1973-74.'

While one may be skeptical as to how much weight to attach to these estimates (for reasons which I have already indicated), it is interesting that they simply do *not* support the gloomy certainties about the failure of the growth strategy, and even its perversities, that the Suslovs of the anti-growth-strategy advertised.

At the same time, I am impressed by the analysis of Etienne (1982), who has argued convincingly from first hand evidence from extended stays in a large cross-section of villages, which he had surveyed a decade earlier, that poverty has indeed been impacted upon, and that too where growth has occurred.

Since his work focuses on the Green Revolution and precisely therefore on the question whether growth impacts on poverty, let me thus turn immediately to the next question which I had posed earlier, i.e., if poverty has diminished, though it is still much too substantial and acute, has not growth helped?

The *statistical* answer, for India, has been given in the affirmative by Montek Ahluwalia in his classic 1978 paper on rural poverty and agricultural performance. He argues that there has been a positive association between reduction in rural poverty and improved agricultural performance if all-India time series data are analyzed. Predictably, this conclusion has provoked controversy. The radical response has been provided by Saith (1981) who has drawn the opposite conclusions while working with the same data set. Careful analysis of the two papers by Subodh Mathur (1985), examining both the econometrics and the economics of the issue, reaches the

conclusion that 'aggregate all-India data support Ahluwalia's contention that agricultural growth reduces poverty.'

However, Srinivasan (1985), who has raised several compelling objections to the econometric procedures and inferences in Saith's analysis, also contends that Ahluwalia's results, which are only confirmed by inclusion of additional data which have become available since 1978 (Ahluwalia, 1985), should not be treated as a decisive test of the pull-up hypotheses. For, the data show that '*there was no upward trend in net domestic product of agriculture per head of rural population — There was very little to trickle-down at the all-India level.*'

Discussing also the related work by Bardhan (1982), utilising some State-level data of still less reliability, Srinivasan has concluded that meaningful tests with more and better longitudinal data than have been available are necessary, by regions or areas differentiated by high and low growth rates, before firm conclusions can be drawn on the issue.

The answer by Etienne, on the other hand, resoundingly confirms what Ahluwalia's analysis suggests.¹ Remember that Etienne does what I call 'doing in India what you do in China', i.e., disregard the numbers (which in any case are hardly available for China) and simply see what your naked eye shows you. He has gone back over time to several villages that he had looked at intensively, often more than a decade earlier. And he observes, asks, examines, and records: much like Jan Myrdal (1966) in his celebrated 'Report from Liu Long' but with more anthropological, sociological and economic discipline and less poetry.

The results are what we did expect: growth has indeed pushed several of the poor on in life.² Doubtless, some poor have been

left behind; others have been impoverished even further. But then, as Arthur Lewis has wisely remarked, it is inherent in the developmental process that some see the opportunities and seize them, leaving others behind until they wish to, and can, follow. Politics and economics can both constrain the capacity of the laggards to follow.

Thus, for instance, the Green Revolution in some instances may well have polarised the distribution of property in the countryside, enriching the farmers who had access to credit, fertilizers and irrigation and immiserized those who did not. In so doing, the radicals had dared to hope that the Green Revolution would help usher in the Red Revolution. But, if Etienne is correct, this has not happened in anything like a significant degree in his cross-section of villages in India.

At the same time, if one moves on to international comparisons, it seems that where growth has indeed been dramatic (as in South Korea and Taiwan), it has indeed shown up in a significant rise in real wages.

Again, while the data base is weak, Ahluwalia's (1976) work suggests that, while inequality may have increased (on cross-sectional evidence) as a result of growth, this has not completely offset the effect of growth, so that absolute income of the poorer quintiles will have increased. Limited time series evidence, over periods of roughly ten year spanning periods, mainly during the 1950s and 1960s, for twelve developing countries, in Ahluwalia, Carter and Chenery (1979) seems to corroborate this conclusion.

I would argue therefore that the evidence of the last three decades suggests, not that growth generally impacts adversely on poverty if at all, but rather the opposite.³ Poverty has tended to diminish where growth

1. In conformity with this general viewpoint is J.S. Sarma's (1981) careful review of the vast literature on growth and equity in Indian agricultural performance.

2. Also see Jan Myrdal and Gun Kessle, (1972).

3. Writing in early 1976, Ian Little came to the same general conclusion. In a trenchant and fierce review of an influential work proposing the thesis that growth had immiserized the poor, he wrote: 'There is no evidence of large

has been sustained over a long period rather than where incomes have grown not at all or sluggishly. The pull-up strategy appears to have worked where the engine of growth was not throttled through bad luck, or worse yet, bad policies!

Let me then turn to what else we have learnt about the relationship between growth and poverty. I should like to comment on several broad themes.

I am afraid that, in regard to radical restructuring as an *alternative* route to impacting on poverty on a sustained basis, the skepticism that marred the early enthusiasm for the Chinese experiment appears to have only been reinforced by later developments. In the 1950s it was often thought that, if only a Chinese revolution could be ushered into the developing countries, its triumphs in eliminating poverty could be replicated.

The skepticism lingered because systematic scrutiny of the Chinese claims was not possible; and one legitimately wondered whether absolute poverty had truly been reduced and also whether growth could be sustained within the new framework, raising questions about the sustainability of the immediate impact on poverty. Now, after the window has steadily opened wider in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution and the failures of the Great Leap Forward, we are not sure at all.

masses of the people (like the lowest 60 per cent or 40 per cent or even 10 per cent) suffering from growth in any country. Even East Pakistan did better when undivided Pakistan was growing fast. Increased misery in Bangladesh has come from stagnation or decline, not growth.... There is no doubt about improvement for the mass of the people in most of the fast growing Asian countries, though this has been contested for Indonesia. Brazil is an oft-quoted case of worsened distribution in a fast-growing country. Even here the estimated fall of the share of the lowest 40 per cent from 10 per cent in 1960 to 8 per cent in 1970 (as quoted in the preface to this book) does not represent an absolute decline.... I believe that the [authors'] conclusions are derived from farfetched fantasy, and there is a danger that they will damage the prospects of the mass of the people in developing countries by contributing to the fashionable populist economic doctrine of immiserizing growth.' (1976, p. 101).

We know now that the barefoot doctors generally wear shoes; that their professional competence occasionally exceeds only marginally that of the average grandmother; and that doctors have dragged their feet almost as successfully as elsewhere when assigned to go to the countryside, indeed to the point where Liushao chi's major crimes were declared by the Red Guards and official pronouncements to include sabotage of the campaign to carry doctors to the rural areas.

We are further told that the Chinese concept of equality was intra-commune, *not* between communes: the rich communes did not generally share their affluence with the destitute ones. And we are now told by the new régime that more than 10 per cent of the Chinese population may be below a rather austere poverty line.

These tantalizing glimpses into China's assault on poverty will almost certainly not be allowed to develop into a fuller picture as in other developing countries, since careful and unfettered scholarly scrutiny is unlikely to be possible in the degree necessary. I am afraid therefore that we shall have to reconcile ourselves to the uncomfortable situation where we do not know for certain the extent to which China's *ex ante* egalitarian methods failed *ex post*, and whether the failures were due to a discordance between their announced and their true objectives or rather due to the limitations of the methods used to achieve the announced objectives.

On the other hand, the proposition that a more equitable distribution of assets at the start of the growth process will generally imply that the new incomes will, in turn, be distributed better is of course quite plausible. In the end, over a longer period, the forces that generate inequality will tend to unequalize the outcomes. But over a generation or two, the net outcomes would be more equal than if we were to start with unequal distribution of assets.

The experience of South Korea and Taiwan, where Japanese occupation is largely credited with

having brought about the initial asset-ownership equalization, underlines this near-truism well. Also, the experience in India, where several micro-level studies have shown the link between asset-ownership and new-income distribution to be a significant factor in a fair number of cases, only underlines the wisdom of supplementing the growth-oriented approach with policy measures that counter this bias.⁴

A policy of 'redistribution with growth,' where the redistribution of assets *precedes* the growth that is designed to impact poverty, has therefore been advocated by several distinguished economists.⁵ If such redistribution can be undertaken politically, and its implementation is not disruptive economically (as was the case with Soviet collectivisation),⁶ we can only rejoice.

However, where such advantages do not obtain and they often do not, the only logical and important policy option is to reorient and supplement the institutional mechanisms that channel the means of new income creation, so that the poorer classes have some access as well to them. I think that is only fair to say that, at the start of the post-war

4. Cf. Suresh Tendulkar (1983).

5. Irma Adelman and Cynthia Morris (1973); and Hollis Chenery, Montek Ahluwalia, Clive Bell, John Duloy and Richard Jo (1974). In this generic class of strategies, I would also include an altogether different kind of proposal that I made for Indian planners to consider in 1973 in the Lal Bahadur Shastri Lectures. I argued for a fractional nationalization of land in each village (or similar unit), which could be set apart to form a Chinese style commune. Those destitute who wished to follow the slow and protracted route offered by the Indian strategy of predominantly relying on growth to impact on poverty would take their chances there; but those who wished to gain employment and some income right away would have immediate access to the commune *a la* China. The combination of both strategies, and access to either *by choice*, would mean that the destitute were not forced into the Indian option of freedom but slow poverty-alleviation or into the Chinese option of loss of freedom through forced removal to the communes but more rapid removal of abject poverty.

6. These are hazards that do not seem to have afflicted China since the elimination of the kulaks seems to have occurred principally during the long civil war itself. Cf. Padma Desai (1975).

period, we had not realized sufficiently the significance of these supplemental measures. We do now.

But the dilemma still remains that the successful implementation of such institutional changes in the teeth of unequal asset distribution and, hence, unequal political power at the grassroots level is an extremely difficult task. And the degree of success of policies aimed at such changes is, to a large extent, a function of the extent to which 'counter-vailing power' is available to the poor through the presence of social action groups and politically viable opposition parties.

It should not be forgotten of course that, in the longer run, substantial growth itself is a factor generating the necessary counter-vailing power through the market place, by raising the demand for labour and increasing its opportunity cost.

Again, many of us have been surprised, though pleasantly this time, by the realization that we had exaggerated our early fears about the trade-off between 'consumption' expenditures (such as financing education and health) and investment expenditures aimed at growth and hence ultimately impacting poverty. It is difficult today to appreciate the widespread notion in the 1950s that primary education was simply a 'natural right', whose implementation reflected the availability of resources. That it was possibly an important means for raising productivity and hence growth and therefore reducing poverty, and that it could therefore be justified on consequentialist ethics, was a later phenomenon.

This holds equally for health expenditures which were viewed with inhibited enthusiasm. There was fear that they would exacerbate population growth and, only later, were considered to have a possibly productivity-enhancing effect on populations that could otherwise be working at impaired efficiency. Also, they might lead to a lowering of the birth rates if by reducing infant mortality and increasing survival rates, they enabled parents to produce fewer babies to wind up with,

their target family size in a steady state.

Much has indeed been written, though little is known with firmness, to wean us away therefore from the fear that such educational and health expenditures are necessarily at the expense of growth. What is equally pleasurable is the fact that many of these arguments apply with yet greater force when the expenditures are addressed to the poorer segments of the population.

The case for undertaking more such expenditures, with focus on the poor, consistent with being engrossed in the growth strategy, is therefore now seen to be stronger than ever before.⁷ I think we have learnt that, within reasonable margins, we may then be able to eat our cake and have it. Social expenditures could improve the welfare of the poor directly and indirectly through growth which in turn would impact poverty.

But there is a wholly different aspect to this issue which has a bearing on what has come to be described as the 'basic needs' strategy. As I understand it, this strategy proposes that expenditures be addressed directly and more massively to education, nourishment and health to impact immediately on living standards.⁸ In essence, therefore, the argument may be phrased as follows. If one wants to impact poverty, we must address it directly rather than indirectly through the growth process. My friend, Paul Streeten, has embodied this proposition in the title to his splendid (1981) work, *First Things First*, though this fetching title may prompt his critics to accept the prescription and put the volume immediately on the shelf!

7. On the other hand, the difficulties of directing the expenditures on primary education and health effectively to the poorer classes when the elites control the political system need to be recalled again. Questions such as the relative priority attached to primary and higher education in State spending and its relationship to the class nature of the State have been discussed at length by economists such as Samuel Bowles and myself. Cf. the extended analysis in my *Education, Class Structure and Income Equality* (1973).

8. There are important questions as to whether this is more effectively, and more efficiently, done by subsidies or by distribution in kind.

I am afraid that this proposition does get us back to the old question: can we make a *sustained* impact on poverty without creating more income? If you believe that growth is harmful to the poor, or if you believe that growth leaves the poor untouched, then clearly the *only* sensible thing is to reduce poverty directly. I wonder if the proponents of these viewpoints would go so far as to allow population growth to overtake income expansion and still feel that basic needs redistribution was the relevant policy: how would such redistribution be financed in the end?

But, banishing these extreme and in my view indefensible positions, the real issue reduces to the trade-off between direct and indirect impacts. You may recall that the Indian planners did undertake significant direct 'basic-needs' expenditures from the beginning. Did we, and others, do too little?

The thesis of Streeten and his associates, as also that of others such as Isenman (1980) and Sen (1981) who have supported this position, is that we fell very short. Critical to this thesis is *not* a different set of intertemporal weights attached by these authors to the outcomes on benefits to the poor: for, a shift at the margin to direct expenditures will produce more now and less later. Rather, it is a highly optimistic view of the 'productivity' of direct means and a greatly pessimistic view of the efficacy of indirect (i.e., growth-route) means.

I have already discussed the implausibility of the claims that have fed the latter pessimism. As it happens, the former optimism may be no more justified. It has become a favourite pastime of the basic-needs proponents to cite two outstanding success stories in their corner: Sri Lanka and Costa Rica. As it happens, however, a brilliant analysis of Sri Lanka (which cries out for a similar examination of Costa Rica) by Bhalla (1984) has discredited this success story.

It turns out that Sri Lanka's claim to attention consisted in substantial direct expenditures addressed to the poor and also splendid performance on indices such as

literacy, life expectancy and infant mortality rates which were then assumed to be a result of these direct expenditures.

But these indicators were already remarkably high by 1948 itself: a fact that was not allowed for in the Isenman-Sen argumentation which relied astonishingly on single-time-period cross-country comparisons. When *changes* in these indices are considered for 1960-78, it turns out that Sri Lanka's performance on these criteria shrinks into mediocrity. Of six indicators analyzed, for only two — life expectancy and the death rate — does Sri Lanka do better than average; and, if a strict statistical test is used, only the death rate survives to fit this bill.

With this reversal of conclusions based on changes in, rather than on levels of, the performance indicators, the question arises whether the low performance of Sri Lanka in this recent postwar period reflects low growth rates, reinforcing exactly the opposite conclusion to what is presumably being contended! As it happens, Bhalla has cited estimates of Sri Lanka's per capita income growth rate, based on the Kravis-Summers-Heston methodology. These show that, during 1960-78, Sri Lanka had a negative annual growth rate — 1.2 per cent along with only five other countries including Burundi, Benin and Angola!

Can it be that the diversion of expenditures away from growth to ('social') direct expenditures affected growth adversely and hence impacted on the poor more than the direct expenditures helped them? Or were economic policies so bad that growth was affected adversely and impacted on the poor, and increased direct expenditures had to be undertaken to offset the adversity for the poor? In short, the mediocrity of Sri Lanka's recent performance on the living standards of the poor may be explainable by hypotheses that only sustain the advisability of assigning primacy to the growth oriented route to ameliorating poverty!⁹

9. Of course, we can still speculate as to what made Sri Lanka in 1948 such an impressive performer on living standards for the poor. Was it high growth rates,

Yet another question of substance to have surfaced in the developmental literature has related to the relevance of different modes of growth to the problem of poverty.

There has been a particularly acute concern about the impact of outward-orientation or export-promoting (EP) strategy on employment creation and hence (presumably along the mechanism implicit in the formulation of the rationale of the growth strategy that I outlined at the outset) on poverty.

Curiously, it was the proponents of the import-substituting (IS) strategy who initially took the offensive on this issue, asserting that the IS strategy would ensure more rapid growth even if it was insufficient in raising current incomes as evident from many empirical studies of the two strategies.

As it happens, the results of fresh studies inspired by such contentions have been to underline the comparative merits, and not demerits, of the EP strategy in this regard. I refer here to the important findings of Anne Krueger (1983) and her associates in her major 3-volume study of this subject. The EP strategy has not merely led to rapid income growth but also to immediately greater increase in demand for labour, *ceteris paribus*. A major reason is the labour-intensiveness of export industries in the EP-strategy led countries.

In the end, however, I must confess that, even when the growth process has been modified in ways suggested by postwar experiences and experimentation so as to ensure that the incomes do get through to the poor, must confront the dilemma that has long been known to the sociologists of poverty: that the poor may spend their incomes on frills rather than on food. As the Japanese proverb goes: each worm to his

high social expenditures, each or both over a long period and some specific advantages affecting growth such as low population pressure in a naturally fertile economy producing export-led products? Only detailed historical analysis, carefully sifting among different hypotheses, can throw light on that issue.

taste; some prefer nettles. Perhaps you have heard of the seamen's folklore which recounts the story of the sailor who inherited a fortune, spent a third on women, a third on gin, and 'frittered away' the rest!

For those of us who feel that certain basic needs ought to be satisfied, this tragic assertion of what economists have come to call rather extravagantly 'consumer sovereignty' leaves us confronting a familiar moral-philosophical issue. Should we actively intervene so that the poor are seduced into better fulfilment of what we regard as their basic needs? I do. In fact, I see great virtue in quasi-paternalistic moves to *induce*, by supply and taste-shifting policy measures, more nutrient food intake, greater use of clean water, among other things, by the poor.

In thus compromising the important principle of unimpeded and uninfluenced choice, simply for the poor and not for others, evidently I adopt the moral-philosophical position that I do not care if the rich are malnourished from feeding on too many cakes but do if the poor are malnourished from buying too little bread, when their incomes can buy them both proper nourishment if only they were to choose to do so. In this, I am in the ethical company of Sofya (Sonia) Marmeladova in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* who, in turning to prostitution to support her destitute mother, sacrifices virtue for a greater good.

Where does all this leave us? Evidently the reduction of poverty is now seen as a more complex and textured process than we had hoped for in the 1950s. But it is equally manifest that the claims that the correct strategy for raising the living standards of the poor was fundamentally misspecified by us are without substance. The experience of the postwar years has essentially taught us to supplement this basic (growth-route) strategy for assailing poverty by policy instruments whose significance was insufficiently appreciated at the beginning of the developmental and planning process. There is evidence already in the policies of many developing countries that these lessons have been learnt.

UN and development

P. N. DHAR

THE United Nations Organisation was born in the turmoil created by the great depression and World War II. The world that emerged in 1945 was a devastated world. The need for international economic co-operation and its institutionalisation through effective multi-lateral institutions was obvious then. After having experienced the destructive potential of beggar-thy-neighbour policies of the inter-war period and the holocaust of the war, international economic co-operation did not need special arguments. The settlement for it was widely felt and articulated.

The brilliant success of European economic recovery under the Marshall Plan indicated what was possible when nations cooperate. The need for similar co-operation was obvious in the case of under-developed countries if their economic backwardness was to be successfully overcome. And when less developed countries started emerging from their colonial status to that of sovereign independent States, it also became obvious that their newly acquired political status needed to be buttressed by economic growth.

In these circumstances the elevation of the concept of 're-construction' to 'development' was a logical

step. Instruments of technical assistance and development aid were fashioned and added to other institutions which together constituted the post-war liberal international economic order.

The UN and its associated technical agencies were an important component of the infrastructure of this order. It was faith in this order that inspired the signatories of its Charter. According to the Charter, a fundamental purpose of the UN is 'to achieve international co-operation in solving problems of economic and social character' and to be 'a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends.' The UN system, the World Bank, the IMF and the GATT provided the framework of multilateral arrangements to attain these objectives. The new international regime formulated the rules of the game for the functioning of the world economy.

Thus, the new regime promoted freer trade which led to unprecedented increase in world trade, capital flows to the LDC's stimulating their economic growth at unexpectedly high rates and macro-economic stability which made monetary turbulence and exchange-rate instability of the inter-war period look like primitive mismanagement which was not to recur again. The post-war economic prosperity turned out to be unprece-

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dented. The period 1870 to 1914 has been described by economic historians as the golden age of capitalism. In the post-war period, trade and output increased at a rate which was double that of the golden age period.

This great boom lasted a quarter of a century till the beginning of the 70s. Many developing countries participated and benefited from this boom. The contribution of the UN systems and of the multilateral co-operation in bringing this about is undisputed.

The UN also endeavoured and succeeded in bringing to the fore the concerns of the LDCs. Let me give a brief description of these endeavours. An important step in this direction was the establishment of the Regional Economic Commissions. These Commissions reported systematically on the economic situation and prospects of the countries in their respective regions. The Regional Commissions were followed by the setting up of the UNDP, UNCTAD and UNIDO, organs of the UN predominantly concerned with the problems of the developing countries.

Through the work of the regional commissions and other sources it became apparent in the late fifties that inadequate economic progress in the LDCs had led to a considerable widening of the gap between them and the industrialized world.

The awareness of this increasing gap and a recognition of the need to focus attention on it gave rise to the concept of a Development Decade. The idea was to coordinate the activities of the governments and international organisations to narrow the distance between the rich and the poor countries. Thus, the UN General Assembly designated the period 1961-70 as the first United Nations Development Decade which was followed by the Second Decade in 1971-1980. We are now in the middle of the third such decade.

With the passage of time, the goals and objectives of the development decade and the policies designed to achieve them became more specific and also more elaborate. The First

Development Decade exercise was a modest one; its goals were somewhat limited. It called for a flow of technical assistance and capital to the developing countries amounting to one per cent of the combined national income of the developed countries. The objective of the exercise was a minimum annual rate of aggregate national income growth of 5 per cent for the LDCs,

In the event, the national income of the LDCs as a group for the decade grew slightly faster than the target rate. This was largely as a result of rapid and steady growth of exports from developing countries. However, because of the rapid increase in population, the performance turned out to be less impressive in per capita terms. In addition, the economic disparities were found to prevail at not only the international level but also at the national level. The programme for the Second Decade was therefore prepared to take this factor into consideration and lay stress not only on an increase in income but also on the qualitative aspects of development.

The exercise for the Second Decade was therefore undertaken in much greater depth. Its objectives and policies were woven into what became known as the international development strategy. The strategy placed the development activities of the world community in a more coherent and comprehensive framework. The Committee for Development Planning, an advisory body of high level experts was set up in 1966 to assist the UN in its activities relating to development planning and long-term development. Based on the work of this Committee which was assisted by the entire UN system, the General Assembly adopted the strategy for the Second Decade.

For the developing countries as a group, quantitative economic targets were specified within an internally consistent framework. The aggregate framework included target rates of growth of GDP (6 per cent), for agriculture (4 per cent), for manufacturing output (8 per cent) and so on. At the same time, the strategy emphasized the objectives of bringing about a more equitable distribution of income and

wealth for reasons of both social justice and efficiency, raising substantially the level of employment, and extending facilities for education, health, nutrition and social welfare.

In the policies negotiated for the attainment of these and related targets, particular stress was laid on expansion of exports, including exports of manufactures and semi-manufactures of the developing countries and increasing the flow of financial resources to them. The developed countries were to provide 0.7 per cent of their national income by way of official development assistance. The strategy also made a provision for a review and appraisal process to evaluate its implementation.

As the Second Decade, i.e., the decade of the 70s unfolded, the world economy suffered a series of severe shocks. The breakdown of the international monetary system, the sharp increases in the prices of food, fuel and fertiliser, recession, unemployment and inflation in the developed countries came in quick succession. The impressive post-war economic system began to show many cracks and fissures. In the midst of this turbulence, the sharp increase in the price of oil and the consequent shift in terms of trade in favour of oil exporters created a sensation of power among the LDCs. Stimulated by the OPEC, they called for a restructuring of the existing economic framework to establish a New International Economic Order, an order which would be more efficient and more equitable than the existing one.

It was in the context of these developments that the General Assembly determined that the new IDS for the third Development Decade should be designed to promote the development of the developing countries, should be formulated within the framework of the new international economic order; and directed towards achievement of its objective; should be a vast undertaking involving the entire international community for the promotion of international cooperation for development, and should specify

goals, objectives and policy measures, addressed to both developed and developing countries; and, thereby contribute to the solution of international economic problems and sustained global economic development. The new strategy was adopted by the General Assembly in December 1980.

While the new strategy was being negotiated, the oil market was again hardening. The doubling of petroleum prices in 1979 after their having been quadrupled in 1973 boosted the image of OPEC as an extremely powerful element on the international economic scene. In this growing power of the OPEC, the LDCs saw 'evidence' that developed market economies were losing their dominance. With this perception of enhanced bargaining power which was sometimes generalised as commodity-power, the Non-Aligned Conference in Havana in 1980 called for comprehensive negotiations between the North and the South.

These negotiations were to cover the field of development, trade, money, finance and energy and were to be conducted in a simultaneous and inter-related manner. The proposal of the non-aligned was prompted accepted by the G-77, i.e., the bloc of the developing countries in the UN and presented as the demand for what was called global negotiation to the General Assembly. This was intended to be the format of North/South negotiations.

The global negotiations, however, have not taken off the ground. Even the negotiations about how to negotiate have not been conclusive. The result has been an impasse.

Meanwhile, the situation on the ground has not remained unchanged. While the diplomats wrangle and the delegates' posture in the numerous international forums, the world economy has and is undergoing changes which make yesterday's diplomatic stances and negotiating positions obsolete today.

While the strategy for the DD 3 was being approved, the world economy was beginning to plunge into what turned out to be the longest and the severest recession since the

Great Depression of the 1930s. The unexpectedly severe contraction in demand that ensued from the anti-inflationary policies of the dominant industrial countries resulted in widespread slow-down of economic activity. The deceleration was particularly intense in the developing countries. Most of these countries experienced a significant *fall* in per capita incomes especially in Latin America and Africa. Except in the countries of South and East Asia, per capita income has fallen in much of the developing world. At the mid-point of the Third Development Decade the vistas envisaged for it, such as the 7 per cent GDP growth rate, look like a pipe-dream.

The recovery which started in 1983 has been weak, uncertain and limited. It has not been strong enough to pull most developing countries out of their current economic impasse. Continuing protectionism, drying up of private bank credit to developing countries and high debt service ratios have imposed harsh readjustment policies on them and also retarded recovery. The large and increasing federal budget deficit and the widening current account deficit of the United States, the high interest rates and the over valuation of the US dollar have become a major source of uncertainty and instability in the world economy. Altogether, this is not the kind of international economic arrangement that will improve the prospects for sustained growth.

A situation like this, one would have imagined, demanded a joint international response. But this has not happened. Instead, the monetary discipline which broke down when President Nixon delinked the dollar from gold remains unrestored. Protectionist pressures and other non-tariff barriers to trade continue unabated while governments pay formal homage to the principles of free trade. The concessional aid flows remain at half of the 0.7 per cent target of the IDS and, what is worse, the political support to multilateral institutions has weakened.

The IDA, the soft loan window of the World Bank which, incidently, played a key role in channelling development funds to India, faces an uncertain future. Aid is now increas-

ingly for friends and allies. The multilateral institutions in general are under a shadow. After UNESCO, UNCTAD is under attack. The disenchantment with the UN itself is regularly fed by unfavourable and negative attitudes of the media in some of the most powerful countries of the world.

What has led to this retreat from multi-lateralism and sharp decline in international co-operation? The phenomenon is so complex that it is not easy to provide a simple answer. We can attempt to understand it at two levels — at the level of ideas and at the level of changes in the configuration of power in international economic and political relations.

- (i) First, at the level of ideas, perceptions and ideologies. There is no doubt that the donor countries are suffering from what is called aid weariness. The development of LDCs has turned out to be a much longer haul than was believed to be the case in the days of optimism generated by the easy success of the Marshall Plan.
- (ii) There has been a sharp ideological change in the attitude towards the role of the State in the sphere of economic development and social change. The concept of the welfare State, even the objective of full employment, has lost a great deal of its political attractiveness. The pursuit of these goals is perceived to have resulted in structural rigidities in the developed market economies. The incomprehensible phenomenon of stagflation, i.e., unemployment accompanied by inflation is traced to these policies. The scepticism about the role of the government in domestic economic matters, inevitably gets extended to inter-governmental bodies. The preference for less government at home leads to demands for similar attitude to intervention in international matters. International Keynesianism cannot thrive if Keynesian policies lose domestic support. Massive transfer of resources to LDCs cannot gather support if transfer payments at

home on account of social welfare, etc., are being retrenched. Hence the shrinking support for IDA or lack of support for an oil facility in the World Bank. Seekers of IDA funds are directed to borrow from private banks on commercial terms and if oil importing poor countries need to explore and develop their oil resources, they are asked to approach oil companies and not demand a new institution tailored for their specific requirements.

(iii) Similarly, there have been realignments in economic power positions. In the post-war period, the US economy was the most dominant economy, as was the British economy during the second half of the 19th century upto 1914. Industrial output of the US was half that of the rest of the world and so was its GNP. It has now shrunk to half that size. The re-emergence of Europe and growth of Japan into an economic super power and the entry of some LDCs into the ranks of industrialising countries has led to the diffusion of economic power. At the end of the second world war, international economic policy coordination was essentially an Anglo-American affair. For example, the success of the Bretten Woods Conference was based on the accord between Lord Keynes of UK and Mr. White of the US. As the American phrase goes, it is a different 'ball game' now except that Pax Americana which followed the war has not been replaced by an effective substitute arrangement to run the global economy.

(iv) With the diffusion of economic power between and across nation-States, there has also been qualitative change in international economic relations. A large volume of economic and financial transactions is now outside the governmental network reducing the role of governmental institutions like the central banks. The multinationals have transformed a large part of international trade into the foreign trade of their

host countries. A sizeable volume of financial transfers across national frontiers constitute their internal accounts in which key decisions are taken by these companies.

(v) With the near completion of the decolonisation process, the membership of the UN has grown three-fold since it was founded in 1945. The LDCs now dominate the membership of the organisation. This has inevitably shifted the nature of problems and concerns which form the UN agenda in the economic and social field. The developed market economies have not relished this inevitable change in the texture of the United Nations. Since real economic decisions are taken elsewhere — at the IMF, the World Bank, and GATT, institutions which they dominated on account of weighted voting rights, the developed market economies have adopted an attitude of indifference to the debates in the UN forums. With the establishment of OECD, these countries now rely more and more on that organisation as a forum for discussing their problems, concerns and adoption of common positions.

(vi) The centrally planned economies have grown into an important subset of the international economic system since 1945. The detente accelerated the pace of the integration of these economies with the parts of the international system, especially through the trade and financial and technology flows. But the recession and the resurgence of East-West tensions has somewhat slowed it down. Generally speaking, these countries have supported the LDC point of view. But the support has been to resolutions, ideas and concepts. Otherwise, in the North-South dialogue, they are on the sidelines, describing it as issues between LDCs and developed market economies. Outside their own bloc, they conduct their economic relations in bilateral rather than multilateral terms. Their interest in multilateral arrangements is more pronounced

ed in political and security areas.

So far I have touched upon ideological changes and power realignments. I would like to say a word now about the negotiating style of the developing countries. The developing countries have constituted themselves into a loose political coalition and articulate their point of view as a Group — known as G-77. It had 77 members when it was constituted, the number has now grown much larger. The group lacks a technical and professional back-up of its own. For professional assistance, it has depended on UN entities, especially the UNCTAD.

The mode of negotiation of G-77 is to put together and present all the demands made by members of the Group without any regard to selectivity. Sometimes, the package of demands presented by the Group lacks internal coherence and is, in any case, heavy and cumbersome. The dominance of diplomats makes the Group's point of view often long on political rhetoric and short on economic substance.

The result of this style is that it makes even those sympathetic to the G-77 point of view despair of the UN as a negotiating forum. In recent years, this style was encouraged by the perception that OPEC's strength added to their bargaining power. In point of fact, OPEC power has turned out to be a transient bloom. Oil has been cut down almost to the status of other ordinary commodities. In the short run, disruptions in the oil market are feared because of OPEC weakness and not because of OPEC strength.

Where does the UN Secretariat stand in the context of these changing ideas and power alignments, the Secretariat which played a very distinguished role in generating ideas that strengthened international co-operation. It continues to do so but with diminished vigour. Parkinson's law has taken its toll there. There has been a proliferation of the Secretariat which has affected its elan. The quality of its personnel has suffered more than would be warranted by the consideration of fair geographical distribution. There is

undoubtedly scope for improvement in organisation. Luckily, the present Secretary General is aware of the need to set his house in order. But he cannot go very far without the support of the member governments.

The multiplicity of forums and duplication of work by different units and agencies has led to waste of time, effort and money. While the Secretariat cannot escape its share of blame for it, it is also true that delegations of the same government often speak in different voices in different forums because they represent different Ministries and lack coordination among themselves. Individual Ministries develop individual interests and pursue them as such. If the organisation has to become more efficient, the Secretariat and the member States have to work together to simplify procedures and the mechanism. In the final analysis, the United Nations is what the member States make of it. If the Secretariat has to pull its weight it has to organise itself to perceive and comprehend emerging issues and come up with suggestions to tackle them.

If the downward slide in international cooperation is to be stopped and reversed, all the main actors in the field have to make an effort in the same direction.

The G-77 needs to reconsider its agenda and negotiating techniques. Its agenda needs to be trimmed down and its negotiating techniques have to be more business-like. It also needs a strong technical Secretariat of its own, similar to the OECD Secretariat. To be sure, there are some in their ranks who look upon the UN mainly as a platform for agitating some issues to supplement their efforts at other negotiating forums. There would be something to be said for such a view if it could achieve its purpose. If, for example, attacks on IMF conditionality in UN forums would soften the IMF, the effort would be worthwhile. But one wonders if it has been so. There is a fear that such approaches merely downgrade the UN among negotiating forums.

The UN has made constructive contributions when it has come up with

innovative suggestions such as the General Scheme of Preferences or the proposals of SUNFED which ultimately produced UNDP and IDA. Even the IMF, that singularly aloof institution, had to accept the scheme for Compensatory Financing of export shortfalls which originated in the UN.

Even if everyone plays the game right, the consensus on development which has been lost cannot be regained unless the developed industrial countries regain their faith in it. At the moment, radical conservatism seems to have turned its face against it. It is true that the preponderant weight of the dominant industrial countries in the world economy endows their actions and policies with dominant influence on the rest of the world. But the increased interdependence that has taken place during the last 15 years makes coordination of macro economic policies a pre-condition for the smooth running of the international economic system. Given the diffusion of power, it is no more possible for a single country, however powerful, to impose a consensus in terms of its domestic interests or ideas alone. The new consensus has to be arrived at by harmonizing actions and policies of nations in the attainment of common ends — I am here repeating the language of the UN charter which I quoted at the outset.

The pleas of the developing countries and eminent individuals and experts have gone unresponded so far. Perhaps the dominant industrial countries need someone like Winston Churchill to repeat to them what he told the House of Commons in 1937. Churchill said then: 'I think we ought to place our trust in those moral forces which are enshrined in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Do not mock at them. For this may well be a time when the highest idealism is not divorced from strategic prudence. Do not mock at them. For these may be years when right may walk hand in hand with might.' If this could be said about the Covenant of the League of Nations in 1937, how much more relevant is it in 1985 for the Charter of the United Nations.

Books

SECULAR VALUES IN SECULAR INDIA by
P.C. Chatterji. Published by the author, New
Delhi. 1984.

THIS book written by a trained philosopher answers with considerable skill and lucidity issues like what is secularism, the distinction between the secular and sacred spheres of life, the connection between religion and rituals, the relationship of morals to religion, whether religion can exist in a secular State and a whole host of other philosophical issues. Almost two-thirds of the book is devoted to a discussion of these problems. For purposes of analysis, the author takes up Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism, though there are occasional references to Christianity as well. The discussion is conducted with great assurance and insight and this is what is admirable about the book.

In the last chapter (Secularism: Problems and Prospects), however, the author discusses some of the recent developments in regard to communal riots, communal ideology, the problem of backward classes and a number of related issues. It is here that he seems somewhat out of his depth. The kind of issues that he is dealing with required a background of either history or political sciences. Though in some ways the handling is competent, he fails to say anything original or insightful. One notable omission is a discussion of the role of electoral politics in the communalisation of the Indian polity over the decades and the use and manipulation of vote banks on a large scale.

The book however stands or falls by what is discussed in the first six chapters where he grapples with the intellectual and moral framework of secularism. In his first chapter, the following opinion expresses his point of view concisely:

'The very concept of the secular State does violence to the major religions of India. This is particularly so with Hinduism and Islam and applies to a lesser extent to Sikhism and Buddhism. A secular Indian State must necessarily interfere with religion as traditionally conceived. What, therefore, is required if a secular State is to exist is a radical change in the conception of religion, a drastic narrowing of its sphere of operation.'

The author goes beyond this statement and refers to other inter-related facts as well. Far reaching changes were introduced by the British in the 19th century in the legal system of the country. Those changes had the effect of reducing the capacity of religion to influence daily life. What has happened since 1947 is not even a continuation of what had been initiated and indeed accomplished by the British. For instance, the Muslim personal law has

remained unchanged, though it is widely known that it has been changed in Pakistan. The Indian State, however, has chosen to treat this particular sector of activity as beyond its jurisdiction.

In my judgement, having once identified these fairly prominent features of the Indian polity, it should have been easy enough for him to go on further and analyse the role of the Indian State a little more incisively. The fact of the matter is that in the first decade or so after the partition, communalism was on the defensive. Since then it has been growing from strength to strength. This has not happened entirely on its own. It has been to a great extent aided and abetted by the role of the various political parties. Each one of them, whether on the Right or the Left has paid court to the division of the Indian society into castes and religions. All electoral strategies have been based on those calculations. The way these strategies have fed on one another has led to the situation in which we find ourselves today and this constitutes the major tragedy of Indian political life.

Towards the end of the book the author does refer to some of these things. But somehow that does not constitute the bedrock of his argument. Instead, he says 'The average intelligent Indian committed to the ideals of secularism has in all probability hoped for the loosening, if not the total disappearance, of group or ethnic identities. Ethnic groups, it was thought, would be replaced by groups having economic, professional and other communalities.'

The author has however not chosen to expand on this statement. What are those social forces, whether acting singly or in combination with one another, which would lead to the loosening of group or ethnic identities? What is the strength of those economic and political forces which would ultimately lead to the weakening of these group or ethnic identities? This and several related questions were worth asking but have not been asked. This is what I find disappointing about the book.

Perhaps, I am putting it too strongly. On the plane of intellectual analysis (particularly in regard to the extent the philosophies of various religions complement or contradict one another and to what extent it is possible to establish and live by a set of values which are not based on any religion but, rather, on a body of thought in which enlightened men may feel comfortable) the book is exceptionally strong. His knowledge of the history of various religions, their doctrines, the changes which they have undergone over the centuries and the influence which they have exerted on the societies in which they have operated is not only profound and extensive, it is even impressive.

It is these sections which stand out in terms of sheer solid scholarship. Any one who chooses to

read the book carefully will learn a good deal from it. But if he turns to the book in order to understand why communalism is stronger today than it was a few decades ago, this book is not going to prove particularly helpful.

Amrik Singh

COMMUNAL RIOTS IN POST-INDEPENDENCE

INDIA edited by Asghar Ali Engineer. Sangam Books, (Pvt) Ltd, Bombay, 1984.

HAS communal violence become so much an integral part of the landscape of our country that we have, over time, learned to live with it? This is the key question that the authors of this study (originally based on papers read in a Seminar organised by the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies, Bombay, and Ikhwanus Safa Trust in December 1981) examine from what is primarily a theoretical and academic point of view.

Although the subject is one on which there would appear to be little new to impart, the contributors are perceptive in some of their observations such as the fact that the democratic process in India has failed to weaken caste and communal solidarity and in fact has strengthened them. The analysis of post-Independence India is significant, because although it was partition that sparked such unprecedented communal violence, new factors on the socio-political horizon of the country have contributed in aggravating, or even causing the eruption of, communal and caste violence.

Asghar Ali Engineer, the editor of this book, a prominent left-wing intellectual and leader of the reformist group in the Dawoodi Bohra community, argues well that the communal phenomenon is political in origin. He notes that communal tension arose as a result of the skilful manipulation of the religious sentiments and cultural ethos of a people by its elite which aimed to realise its political, economic and cultural aspirations by identifying these aspirations as those of the entire community. This he says is only one aspect of the phenomenon, but he does not discuss it fully in all its complexity.

In his essay 'Case Studies or Five Major Riots From Bihar Sharif to Pune' he gives a first hand account of the causes and values of the communal riots in Bihar Sharif 1981, Godhra, Ahmedabad 1982, Pune and Solhapur. The Bihar Sharif carnage, he maintains, proves the proposition that the present caste and communal riots are organised by those who want to stop the upward social mobility of the scheduled castes or minorities, as they do not wish to give any share of development or progress to these deprived communities.

Using a well organised set of statistics and empirical data collected from a number of centres of communal violence, he draws valuable conclusions, primarily that communal riots, though remaining an urban phenomenon, are with some exceptions, more likely to erupt in medium sized towns like Aligarh,

Jamshedpur, Moradabad, Bhiwandi, Varanasi, Godhra, etc., than in large urban conglomerations or cosmopolitan centres.

One important reason for this could be that the majority of people living in these towns are from the lower middle classes and their religio-cultural behaviour tends to be more segregationist and conservative. These small towns have a comparatively higher proportion of Muslim population, most of them being thriving centres of small-scale artisan-based industries. The increased prosperity among the Muslims leads to increased political aspirations among them, thus challenging the traditional political leadership of the town.

N.C. Saxena, another of the contributors in his essay, 'The Nature and Origin of Communal Riots', feels that the picture could be different from 'the one drawn by Engineer. Muslims in India, he says, have acquired the psychology of a deprived group. This is evident when you compare their status with Muslims of other Muslim majority countries, or with their own status during the British days when they had a strong political party, administrative and political reservations, separate electorates and a godfather in the British empire. They have not been able to come to grips with the changed realities of a secular country and they feel alienated. It is this feeling of alienation that manifests itself in the form of hostility towards the Hindus.

The myth of Muslim aggressiveness and Hindu defensiveness, of Muslim fanaticism and Hindu tolerance, must be discarded before the phenomenon of violent communal inter-action in post-Independence India can be dispassionately dissected and understood, says Syed Shahabuddin in his article 'Communal Violence — A Challenge to Plurality'. Attributing a certain moral bankruptcy and emotional apathy to our intelligentsia, he maintains that people swearing by non-violence become insensitive to violence when directed against the Indian Muslim.

The recent phenomenon of Arab influence has no doubt added to the communal tension through envy and suspicion. The conversion of members of scheduled castes to Islam in Tamil Nadu in 1981 was seen as an attempt by the Muslim missionaries to lure the scheduled castes into their fold thus threatening freedom and independence itself. There is however no tangible evidence that would go to show that Arab money was involved on a large scale in the conversions of the scheduled castes in Tamil Nadu, but in the popular mind such evidence has often been presumed to exist.

The author suggests that a detailed investigation may be rewarding for the insights that it may offer in understanding not only the conversions but also the emerging pattern of ethnic relations among caste Hindus, the scheduled castes and the Muslims. It is his thesis that this pattern may be a crucial determinant in the decades to come of the nature of development within the polity despite its superficial modernisation and rationalisation.

In his article, 'Caste and Communal Violence and the Role of the Press', S.B. Kolpe shows that, by

and large, the press in India never played the role of cementing the gulf between the Hindu majority and the minority communities even in the cultural, social and literary fields.

Sharing common ground with Syed Shahabuddin's view on media reporting of communal violence, that the existing regulations and guidelines about publication of information being not only inadequate but counter-productive, he goes on to an illuminating discussion on the Jabalpur communal carnage of 1962 wherein the suicide of a Hindu unmarried girl and the arrest of two Muslim boys on a charge of attempted rape sparked off riots which most of the national dailies reported to be a conspiracy of Pakistani agents, Kolpe's investigation revealed in this instance that the press by concealing facts, or reporting the version of the local authorities which are most often one-sided, incomplete or evasive, is bound to have a pernicious effect on the nation as a whole.

Any work which attempts to deal with a subject as volatile as communal riots is bound to be controversial. Nevertheless, this is a stimulating work, an excellent and timely study of the issue—substantively sound, mature in judgment and readable. The major ideas in the continuing debate among experts are properly identified and well discussed.

Sujata Varadarajan

**FROM MOBILISATION TO INSTITUTIONAL-
ISATION: The Dynamics of Agrarian Movement in
20th Century Kerala by T. K. Oommen. Bombay,
Popular Prakashan.**

THIS book is a result of the author's desire to study an 'agrarian movement which is certainly not non-violent in its orientation,' with a view to see its impact on social transformation. Oommen seeks to carry out a systematic analysis of the link between agrarian legislation and movement in the historical context.

Most analysts have termed all rural mobilisations as peasant movements. Oommen shies away from all categorisation and emphasises the fact that pre-Independence agrarian movements were necessarily anti-British first and anti-landlord second. He is at pains to recognise and distinguish between three distinct identities which 'coexist and interpenetrate'—status (caste), class (economic and occupational) and ideology (party/political). He seeks answers to the question of who participates in what kind of agrarian movement?

The book is primarily about Kerala—an amalgam of three geographical areas—Travancore, Cochin and British Malabar, which had differing agrarian relations. Oommen traces the history of agrarian struggle in all three regions which is most illuminating. Vivid descriptions of the kind

of exploitation perpetrated by landlords (Janmies) over their hapless tenants as well as their completely debauched life-style abound.

The extremely valid point, that this degree of oppression was only possible because Janmies enjoyed not only a so called 'caste advantage' but also State patronage and collusion is well documented. In spite of sporadic and intermittent outbreaks, a militant agrarian movement would have been impossible in the absence of outside assistance. The existing nexus between the Janmies, the British Government, the local bureaucrats and the judiciary made the peasant movement in Malabar political, ideological as well as economic.

Travancore did not have such a deplorable land tenure system as Malabar. As such the need for peasant mobilisation was not as acute as in the former. Cochin lay somewhere between Malabar and Travancore—the Janmies had unlimited power and the State followed a policy of non-intervention in landlord tenant relations. Slavery had been abolished in 1854 but slaves continued to be attached to their masters with semi-slave status. Late nineteenth century Travancore was completely caste-ridden; as such the first strike in Travancore in 1907-08 was not the result of any class consciousness but an outcry against social discrimination and oppression though it had an economic content as well in the demand for increased wages and employment security. Exploitation was not confined to agriculture alone; it existed in various forms for mill workers too.

A similar situation existed in Cochin too, though not so acute. A militant peasant movement emerged in the 1930s but it was linked ideologically and organisationally with the anti-imperialist struggle. The Indian National Congress, the Kerala Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party of India gave the movement organisational support. Violence was most frequent when the confrontation was with the government. Initiation of the movements was often in the hands of the agrarian proletariat and leadership was usually provided by higher castes or the educated among lower castes. Initially the movements were primarily social, and only much later did class consciousness emerge, in fact, only after participation in the freedom movement.

Oommen then moves on to the decade after Independence (1947-56) when the mobilisation of peasants became anti-government, and anti feudal. Gradually, agrarian issues became predominant and due to increasing politicization there were occasional conflicts. 1957-72 however witnessed the peak of agrarian mobilisation in Kerala. The limitations of legislation as an instrument of change are discussed. Interests and groups keep changing as disabilities of peasants are removed through legislation and/or movements.

Additionally, Oommen emphasises the point that universal mobilisation is an impossibility. It is sectoral mobilisation that takes place after social

movements attempt a process of 'sacralisation and demonization'—when the secular is transformed into the sacred, local leaders into heroes, ordinary participants into martyrs. Once the political party with mass support comes to power as did the Communists in Kerala, it is bound to enact radical reform. Once in power, peaceful transition to socialism is stressed.

Oommen next addresses himself to the fundamental question he raises— who participates in movements. A detailed analysis based on caste, religion and party affiliations is attempted and also motivational differences between leaders and followers studied, distinctions made between 'personal emotional' orientation and a 'communal emotional' orientation. He arrives at the conclusion that there is no uniformity of motivation amongst movement participants. Just as the first phase of the movement was against the landlords, it is currently directed against the present day capitalist farmers. Goal changes naturally lead to change in participants. Whatever be the conditions the peasantry faces, unless it has some external political support, it will be unable to challenge the power that constrains it.

Despite considerable achievement in abolition of tenancy, limiting land ownership and economic betterment of the agricultural labourer, Oommen feels that the agrarian problem remains basic and fundamental. The tenant in Kerala was not the peasant, the reforms did not redistribute land to the 'real tiller'. A substantial part of land transfer was effected by conferring ownership rights on the tenants and not through redistribution of ceiling surplus land. Though feudalism disappeared and the institutionalisation of agrarian relations led to some degree of legal security, the operation of the land reform machinery left much to be desired. This then provided a new impetus for mobilisation.

Though organisation and institutionalisation accompany mobilisation, the author stresses that they can co-exist; in fact further mobilisation may often be necessitated due to institutionalisation. Thus institutionalisation is not the culmination of a mobilisation. The fundamental question of who participates in movements and why is well dealt with, at once analysing the complex social structure, religious motivation as well as political and ideological commitment.

The book contains some comprehensive, well laid out charts in an attempt to unravel the complicated structure and issues operating simultaneously in agrarian Kerala. However, since the agrarian problem remains unsolved it would have been better if Oommen had discussed an alternative strategy which might have achieved the desired end. The book would have been more complete if he had extended his analysis to the post 1972 period. However, it is well researched and immensely readable and the author is clear about the issues he wants to tackle.

Nandini Mongia

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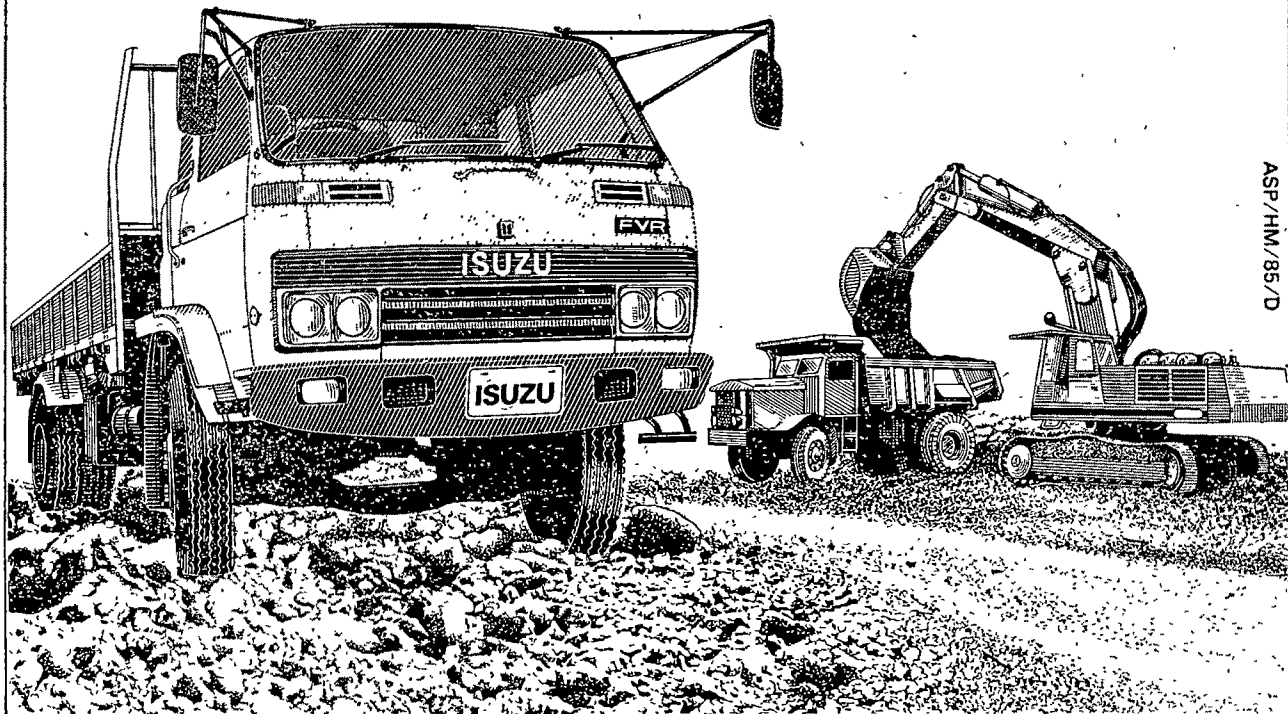
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